BEST SELLIN' SPECTRUM MAG!

SINCLAIR user

No 87 HFL8.90
JUNE 1989
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RED HEAT REVIEWED

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RENEGADE III PLAYGUIDE

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MEGATAPE 16

IF NO MEGATAPE 16 IS ATTACHED HERE TELL YOUR NEWSAGENT IMMEDIATELY!

ON TAPE 16

SIDE A: THE ELECTROGAME! + IRON SOLDIER + ROCK 'ARD COMBAT FROM PLAYERS

SIDE B: PLAYABLE DEMO – TASK FORCE FROM PLAYERS + POKES + SHOTS FROM STREET CRED FOOTBALL

A057581

THIS IS YOUR FIRST ELECTRO NUMBER!
IF YOU CAN BEAT THIS MONTH'S ELECTRO GAME
IT COULD BE YOUR KEY TO:
AN AMAZING SAM SUPERCOMPUTER
OVER 250 US GOLD BLOCKBUSTER GAMES
LOAD YOUR TAPE & TURN TO PAGE 6 NOW!



THE POWER
TAITO COIN-OP HITS
'THE ARCADE COMPILATION OF THE YEAR'
Featuring:
RASTAN
CRASH – "Rastan is slick and compelling"
YOUR SINCLAIR – "So another spanker from Imagine. You'll be a fool if you miss it!"
SLAPFIGHT
COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES – "Simple. Smooth. Very addictive. A winner." ZZAP – "A superb arcade conversion and a great shoot 'em up. This is one for the ZAPPERS collection."
RENEGADE
COMMODORE USER – "As conversions go this still takes some beating – literally and metaphorically."
YOUR SINCLAIR – "The graphics are so slick you really feel you're part of an action movie rather than just playing a game."
ARKANOID
ZZAP 64 – "I thoroughly recommend Arkanoid – for the simple reason that it's simply gorgeous playing with it."
COMPUTER GAMES WEEK – "The take home message is simple. You want a great arcade game?"
FLYING SHARK
COMPUTER WITH THE AMSTRAD CPC – "This is an excellent game."
ACE – "Incredibly frustrating playable and addictive."
ARKANOID REVENGE OF DOH
AMTIX – "Excellent – can't fault it. A future number one."
YOUR SINCLAIR – "Immensely impressive and chronically addictive. A Classic."
BUBBLE BOBBLE
AMSTRAD ACTION – "It's a cracker. Definitely a game I should keep coming back to."
GAMES MACHINE – "Packed to the brim with entertainment."
LEGEND OF KAGE
CRASH – "One I won't put down until I get through to the next level."
COMMODORE
CASSETTE: £12.95
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CASSETTE: £12.95
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RASTAN
LEGEND OF KAGE
FLYING SHARK
SLAP FIGHT
BUBBLE BOBBLE
RENEGADE
Imagine
...the name of the game
AMSTRAD AMSTRAD
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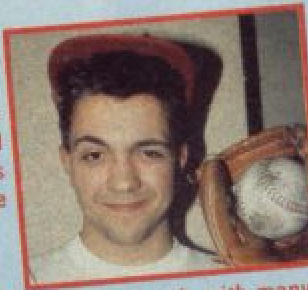
PACKS!
THE IN-CROWD
8 SPECTACULAR GAMES IN 1 SPECIAL PACK
GRYZOR
"If you're looking for a high speed action-packed game that's good to look at and exciting to play – grab Gryzor now!" – Your Sinclair
BARBARIAN
"Its reputation for being the most bloodthirsty computer game ever, means that its phenomenal success will undoubtedly continue." – Sinclair User.
COMBAT SCHOOL
"Combat School is brilliant – definitely the best arcade conversion around." – Zzap 64
TARGET RENEGADE
"If you're after some exciting beat 'em up action this is a good excuse to part with all your hard-earned cash." – Crash
CRAZY CARS
"Crazy Cars is a three-dimensional real-time simulation. This must be the ultimate car game." – Sinclair User
KARNOV
"Stunningly colourful screens ... the most accurate conversion of an arcade hit in years." – Your Sinclair
PREDATOR
"Predator is a superb tie-in and really hits the mark." – ZZAP! Sizzler
PLATOON
"Platoon is absolutely superb – a milestone in film tie-ins, and a yardstick by which all others shall be judged." – Zapp 64
CRAZY CARS
SCHWARZENEGGER
PREDATOR
TARGET RENEGADE
CROWD
GAME SET & MATCH 2
THE GREATEST SPORTS COMPILATION EVER
Score a goal, race on two wheels, compete in the Bob Sled, Ski jump, Slalom and downhill. Match strokes with Nick Faldo, make the winning break against Steve Davies but play a straight bat against Ian Botham, enter the arena in Track & Field as you compete in 100 metres dash, Long Jump, Javelin, 110 metres hurdles, Hammer Throw and High Jump and if that doesn't finish you off then throw jump shots against the basketball aces and go for a touchdown in the NFL Superbowl – then you can sit down ... in the cockpit of a Formula 1 racing car as you compete to take the chequered flag! Check out GSM 2 – the ultimate in sports compilations.
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IAN BOTHAM'S TEST MATCH
MATCH DAY II
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GAME SET AND MATCH 2
ocean
Note: SUPERBOWL and WINTER OLYMPIAD are not available on the AMSTRAD version
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SINCLAIR user

CONT

It's the SU All Stars! Yaaaaaaay!

Jim "The Natural" Douglas



A born superstar. Playing for the Boston Redsox team in the 1947 world series Jim received a near-fatal injury at the hands of a jealous female fan. While details are a little fuzzy, it's known that Jim spent twelve years in traction and psychotherapy after the incident. Now a coach with many youth teams across the States, he makes regular appearances in game shows and sports quiz programmes in the US. He has been paralleled with Emelyn Hughes. Once

ALISON "Tin-legs" Skeat



In shock developments this month, motorcycle stunt racer Skeat was both involved in a horrific accident during a display and a ghastly mix-up in the resulting hospital visit. After weeks of plastic surgery it became clear that something was wrong with the very nature of Alison's appearance. Is there any hope left? Er, no.

TIM "Slugger" Noonan



From the wrong side of the tracks, the boy with the Golden Gloves came to prominence in the late 50's. Noonan made a name for himself throughout the boxing world as one of the worst fighters ever to be allowed in the ring. While finding much public support, Noonan unfortunately received such a pasting in his much publicised fight with Clubber Paris, he was forced to retire from boxing for good and took up a position running an occupational therapy daytime care centre for the slightly bewildered. His first book of poetry is due to be reprinted next month.

CHRIS "Black Avenger" Jenkins



Jenkins was trained by Shaolin monks after being discovered in a pile of noodles at the back of a Chinese take-away in Gerrard St. Now he runs his own martial arts centre in the mountains of South Wales. Described by himself as "the most dangerous man alive", he can break a plank of wood with a sledgehammer, can withstand hours of slight chilliness and can run as fast as someone else who can't run very fast. Truly, a force not to meddle with.

Special thanks this month: Tony "Oh yes ..." Dillon, Jerry Paris, Graham "What?" Taylor. ADVENTURE **The Sorceress** ZAP-CHAT **Jon Riglar** TECHNICAL **Andrew Hewson, Rupert Goodwins** ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER **Katherine Lee** ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE **Martha Moloughney** AD PRODUCTION **Emma Ward** PROMOTIONS **Debbie Pearson** PUBLISHER **Terry 'Power Haircut' Pratt** MARKETING **Clive 'Lovely' Pembridge**
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SOFTWARE:

All the Reviews fit to print!

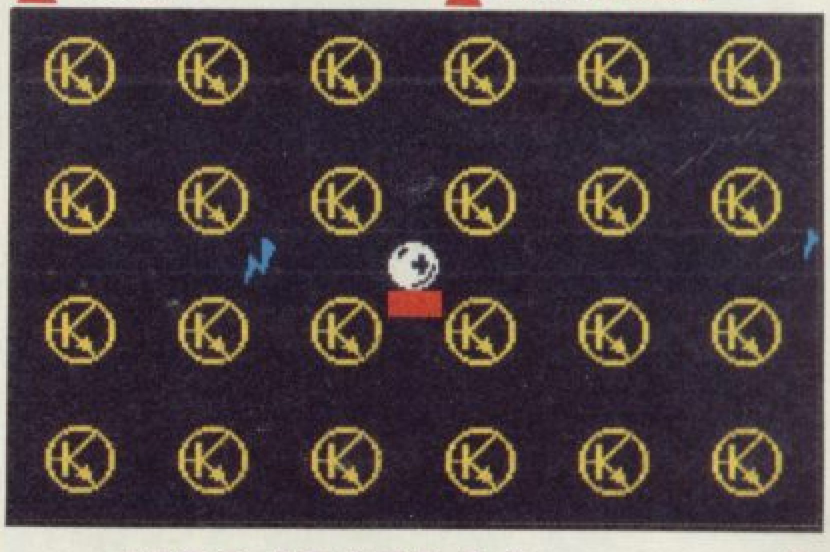
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Red Heat



Carrier Command



MEGATAPE 16 8

ELECTROBINGO IS HERE! Turn to page 8 now in order to learn how you can use the mystical number you've found nestling just beneath Arnie's nose. It could well be your passport to a glorious life on a tropical island, well, alright, it could well be your passport to a life of astounding gamesplaying with Miles Gordon's amazing SAM Supercomputer.

There's also information about the rest of this month's all-star tape line-up. There are two demos – an all-action combat space game and a rough and tough footy extravaganza. And there's a fantastic complete game written specially for us by Players that'll blow your socks off.

ENTS



COVER GAME 12

Is good, yes? Well, you'll have to go to page 12 to find out, 'cos we're not telling you here. But let's face it, a game featuring the hardest man in the galazy, rivalled only by Dribbling Mad Gnasher Noonan the Art Ed, with huge sprites (fyak) and more punching than a queue for the fag counter at Tesco's can't be all bad.



WIN WIN WIN!

Win a SAM SUPERCOMPUTER 8

Get yourself to the Electromegatapebingofestival page NOW to see if you have already won! Virtually no effort required! Fab prizes on offer!

Win a fantastic video player! 26

If you enjoyed last month's compo where you stood the chance of winning a gorgeous compact disc player – if you didn't buy last month's issue, you missed out – this month's will be even better! We've got a fantastic video player/recorder to give away in honour of Ocean's Red Heat release. And just in case that isn't enough, there are SIX copies of the video to be won too.

Win some sex appeal! 37

Summer's nearly here and the time is right for getting yourself down on the beach, kitted out in the finest fashion available and getting eaten by a shark. Aaargh! It's Jaws from newcomers Seven Star, and to herald their appearance onto the Spectrum scene, we've got a super compo where you can win a fab pair of Arena (v.hip) swimming trunks – or a complete cozzy for the girls – and a snorkel set-up too. Can't be bad.

Win some plastic people! 54

Widdly wires! It's Thunderbirds, the forthcoming release from Grandslam and just so you can swot up on the characters you'll be playing in the game, there are stacks of videos of *Thunderbirds – The Movie* that have just got to be won.



BLUEPRINT ▲ 58

An amazing three page special this month with background info on the amazing Silkworm from The Sales Curve through Virginmastertroniclimitedplc.

OUTLANDS 82

It's back back BACK! The pages that haven't been seen since the last issue ride into town, get off their horses, stride through the swing-doors of the saloon and order a glass of milk. This month we've got everything from a new line in rubber toys (ferr-yak!) through Compact Disc Video, Comedy Vids and, of course, Sunglasses.



PREVIEWS ▲ 84

Probably the best previews in the world. This month we've got hot news on Licence to Kill, Continental Circus, Altered Beast, Gemini Wing and more. Colour pics. Release dates. Prices. What more do you want?

BACK ISSUES 76

Not, as you may think, the dullest page in the whole magazine. No! It's actually a chance for you to get a copy of Sinclair User that you may have missed out on in previous months. And most importantly, you can complete your set of Megatapes.



POSTER 59

Pheeeew! Here's a saucy one for the girls (wot girls? – Ed) It's our glorious technicolour Navy Moves poster, celebrating the release of Navy Moves from Spanish software geniuses, Dinamic. It's brilliant, and we don't care who knows it.

ASK THE IMBECILES 48

Hello, good evening and welcome to our must surreal feature yet. We long for those heady days of yesteryear when the Gorgeous Robert Robinson polished his pate and presented quizzes of skull-fracturing dullness. In a tribute to such bygone days we ask you . . . what do you think this object is?

SUBSCRIBE! 94

Not, as you may think, the dullest page in the whole magazine. No! It's actually a chance for you to get a copy of Sinclair User every month before most people and a completely free US Gold Software Stonker into the bargain. If you don't subscribe, you're stupid.

NEXT MONTH 98

What? You haven't started reading this month's yet! Hold your bloody horses.

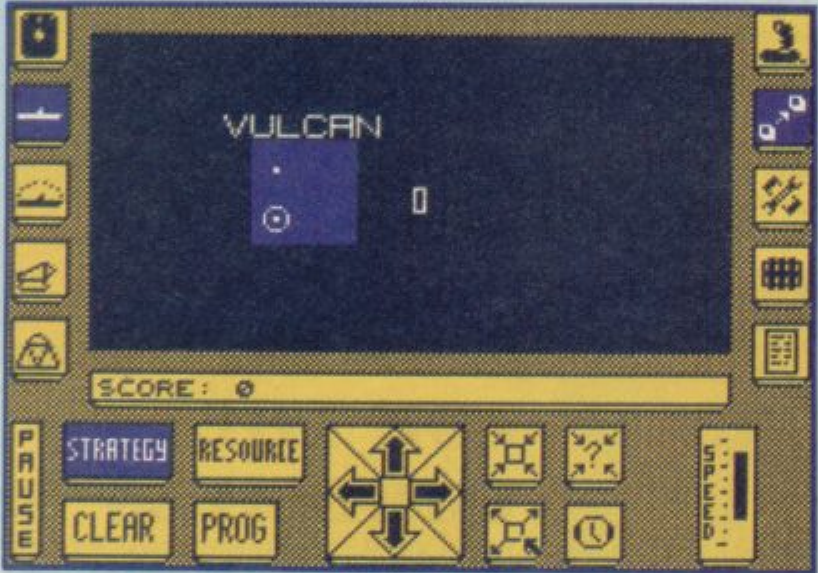
THE REGULAR EVENTS

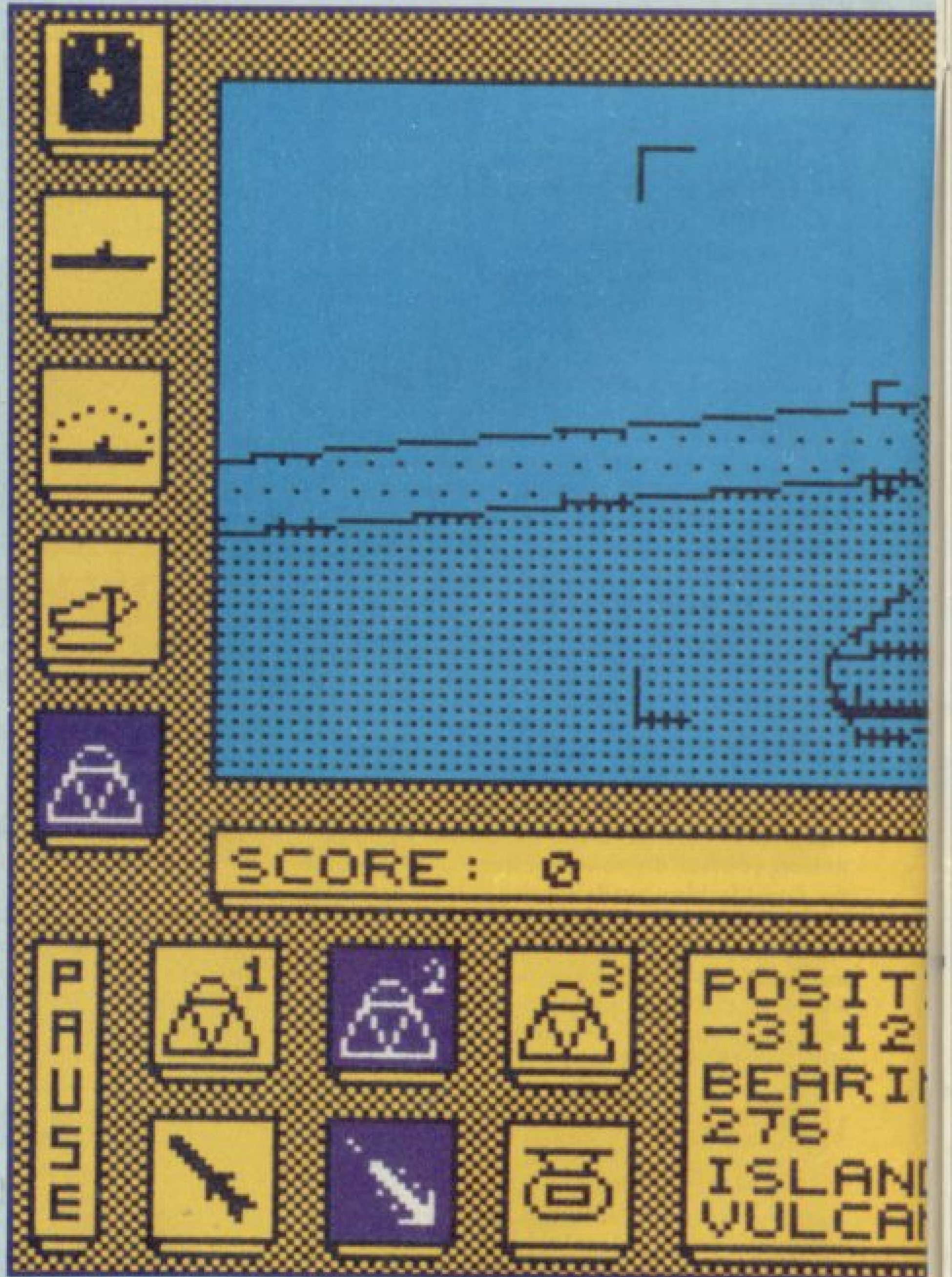
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CARRIER C

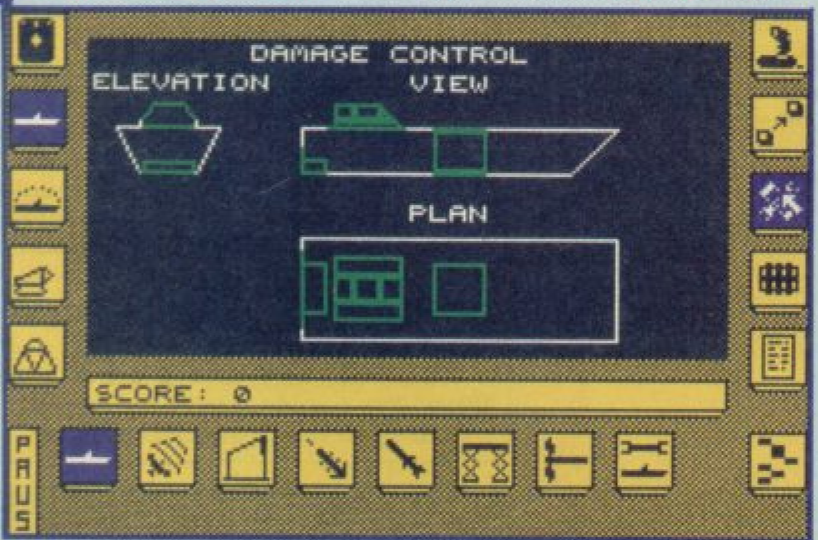
It's taken eleven months of sheer hard work and programming, but it's finally here. Despite what certain other magazines claim (spit), SU brings you the first complete, definitive, review of Rainbird's **Carrier Command,** the sixteen-bit epic now converted to the Spectrum. And boy, has it been worth the wait!

Carrier Command is a paradise for the wargamer or the arcade fan, because it presents you with a complex





strategic challenge played out in an all-action format. Using filled and vector graphics to represent a totally realistic world, the gamer puts you in command of an enormous

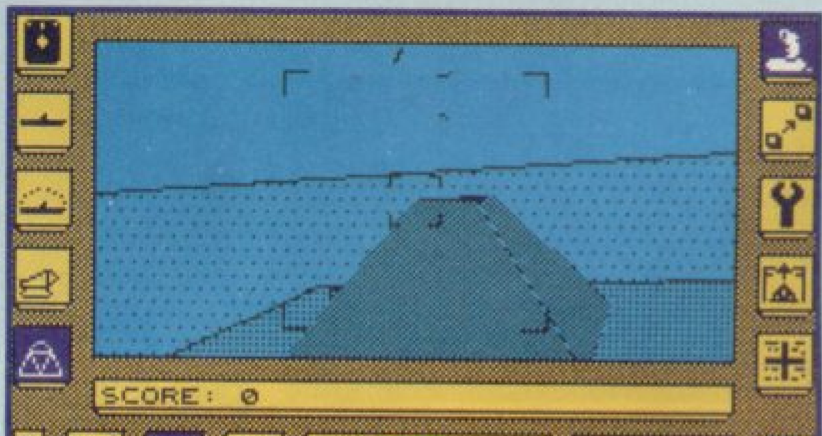


aircraft carrier, the ACC Epsilon. Its sister ship has been stolen by a terrorist group called Stanza – your task is to stop them taking over a strategically vital chain of 32 islands. You must use all the resources of the Epsilon to defeat the enemy carrier, the Omega.

When **Carrier Command** appeared on the Atari ST it was hailed as the best sixteen-bit game yet; amazingly, the Spectrum conversion comes pretty close to the original, but was not surprisngly it's 128K

Written by Realtime Software (**Starstrike, Starglider**) it scores well in all categories. First off, the graphics; they're fast, smooth and accurate. The game is fully icon/joystick driven. The centre of the screen shows you views from your vehicles – the flightdeck of the carrier, your Manta jets or your Walrus amphibians – while the border is surrounded by icons which access the function screens. Here you can arm your vehicles, monitor repairs, examine charts, arrange supplies and check your strategic position.

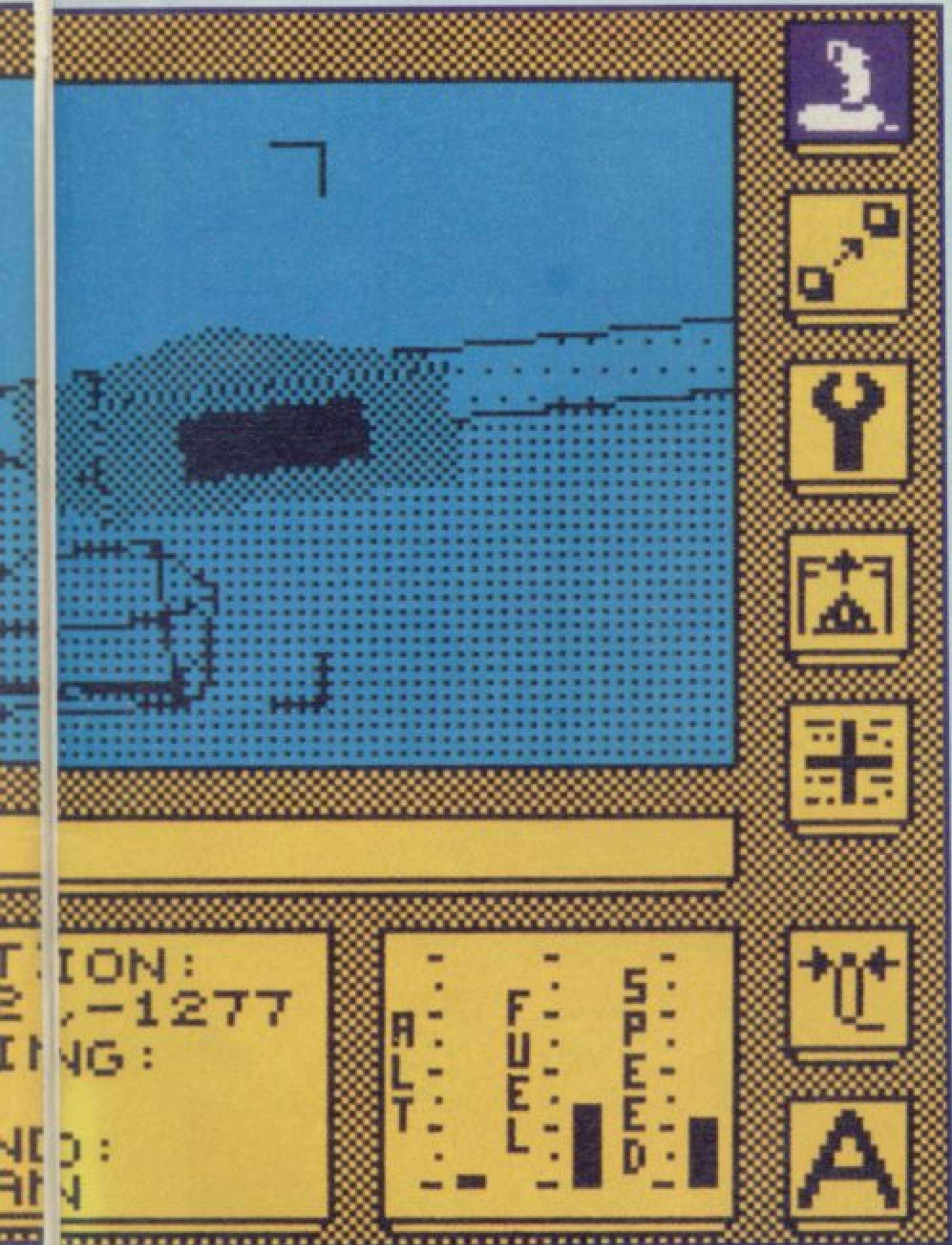
The sound is pretty amazing too; the programmers have obviously tried to mimic as closely as possible the sound of

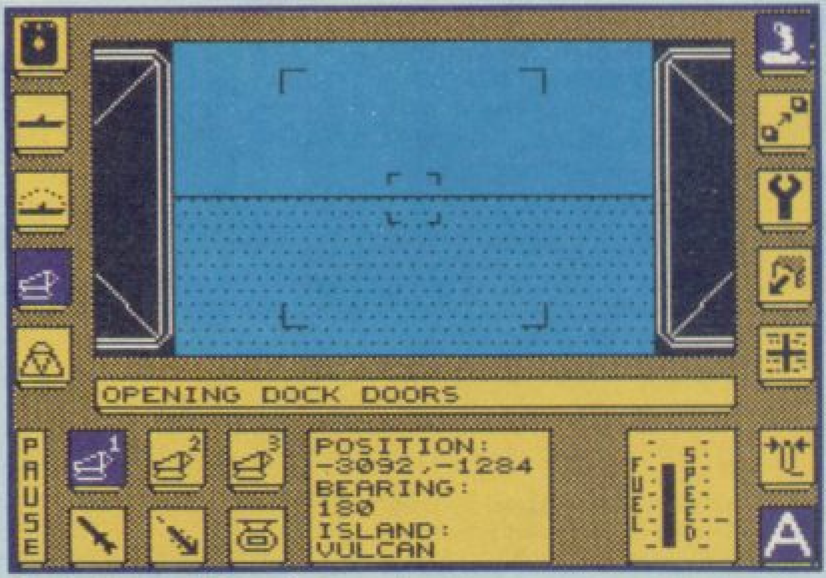


GAMES REVIEW!

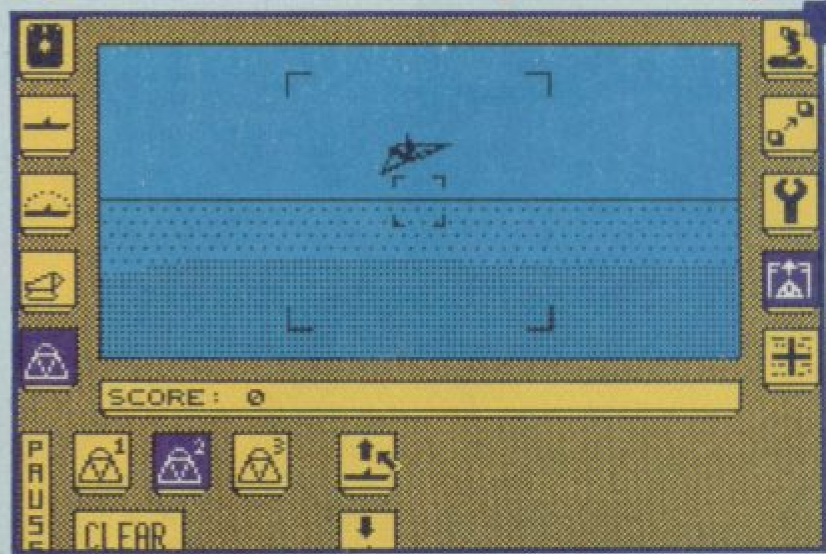
COMMAND

GAMES REVIEW





the Amiga and ST versions, and believe it or not, in some places it's identical (Are you sure about this, Tony? – JD). Certainly this is true of the engine noise made by the Manta, and the explosion effects (Oh, the buzz and the boom – JD).



Fortunately the gameplay has survived intact too. The aim is to take control of all 32 of the islands in the chain, and to do this you will inevitably come into conflict with Stanza's forces. Islands can either be friendly (if you already control them), neutral, or hostile; your computerised map tells you which is which, and keeps track of your vital supply links. The options screen lets you choose a more arcadey or more strategic version of the game.

To take over an island you have to equip a Walrus lander, launch it from the carrier and set up a command centre. You then have to defend it against enemy attack using your Mantas. Just the Manta flying routine would have been enough to make a decent game, but this is just part of the action; you also have to control the Walrus landers, the carrier's laser, automatic defence drones – the list is endless.

To take over an island which is under enemy control you have to destroy their command centre with a laser attack or virus bomb. You can then move supplies closer to your carrier – after all, three Mantas, three Walruses and a carrierload of fuel aren't going to last you very long.

What can I say? A masterful piece of programming, one of the finest products I have ever seen on the Spectrum, and a game which is on a par with **Elite**■

ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

CARRIER COMMAND *Label:* ***Rainbird*** *Author:* ***Realtime Software*** *Price:* ***£14.99 cass, £15.95 disk*** *Memory:* ***128K only*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
95	89
94	96
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

"----------------!" (So brilliant, I'm speechless!)

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

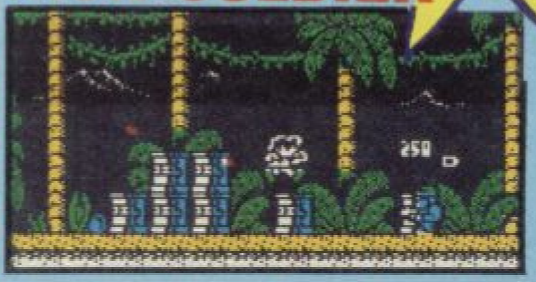
OVERALL **96**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

TAPE 16

MEGA

IRON SOLDIER



All action colour combat from the brilliant Players team.

IRON SOLDIER part 1: the escape

THE STORY

Mercenaries led by Dr Mickhell 'Scumski' Krime, infamous leader of the Soviet terrorist group: KRIME INTERNATIONAL LTD, have over-run the small South Pacific outpost Yap-Yap Six. His army of communist collaborators have constructed a huge fortified base on the island.

CIA intelligence reports suggested that KRIME is planning to invade the nearby US Airforce cruise-missile base on Yap-Yap Seven.

The United Nations, hard core, marine corp special 12 man unit, the legendary 'Iron Soldier' brigade, were secretly dropped on the island. They were equipped with state-of-the-art weaponry, and specially designed time bombs. The squad quickly set about planting their explosives, which, once detonated, would destroy Krime's sinister base.

Just as the last bomb was placed in position, the platoon were discovered. Although outnumbered and outgunned the unit bravely held off the frenzied Red onslaught for almost 15 seconds, before they were tragically cut down in a hail of semi-automatic gunfire. Only one marine, Harry Chainsaw, managed to escape with his life.

THE ESCAPE

Clutching the detonator in one hand, an M60 heavy machine gun in the other, our battered hero staggers from this scene of carnage, collapsing behind a row of oil-drums.

You are Harry Chainsaw, the fate of the free world rests with you. You must battle your way out of the fortress and reach the secret rendezvous point. Your escape will not be easy: Krime's highly trained private Red army of thugs, geeks, hoods and badmen patrol the base. They are heavily armed with machine guns, mortars, grenades, and anti-tank missiles. They have been given orders to kill any intruders, on sight.

THE CONTROLS

Q Leap up. You can only jump up when a ledge of solid support is directly above you.
A Leap down.
O Run left.
P Run right
M and the bottom row: Fire selected weapon.

Alternatively you may select Kempston or Sinclair joystick control from the title page. When using joysticks or keyboard press keys H to ENTER to cycle through your available weaponry.

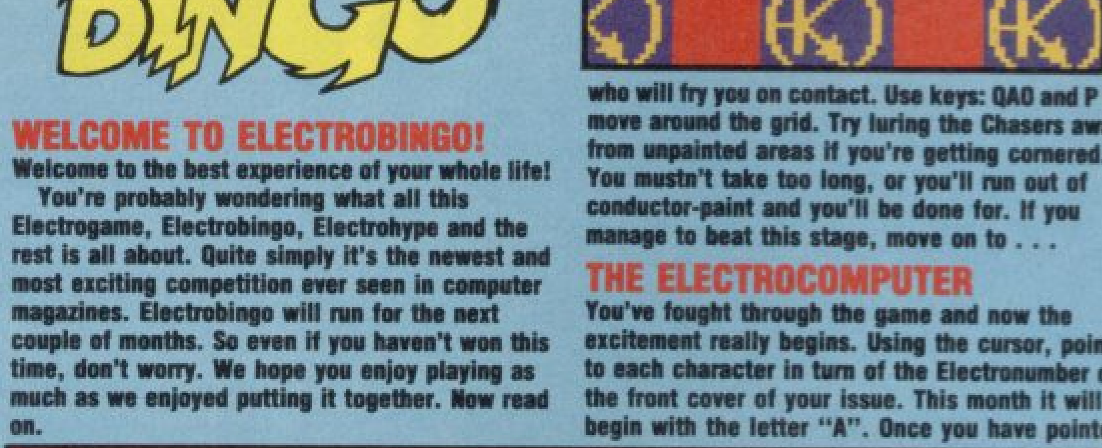
ELECTRO BINGO



WELCOME TO ELECTROBINGO!

Welcome to the best experience of your whole life!

You're probably wondering what all this Electrogame, Electrobingo, Electrohype and the rest is all about. Quite simply it's the newest and most exciting competition ever seen in computer magazines. Electrobingo will run for the next couple of months. So even if you haven't won this time, don't worry. We hope you enjoy playing as much as we enjoyed putting it together. Now read on.



THE ELECTROGAME

Rewind Side A of your tape and load it NOW! Once loaded, follow the on-screen instructions 'til you reach the Game Screen.

Ring those circles! Using your cursor rush around the grid surrounding the Power-plants with special paint. Once you've surrounded one plant, it will light up. Beware the deadly Lightning Chasers who will fry you on contact. Use keys: QAO and P to move around the grid. Try luring the Chasers away from unpainted areas if you're getting cornered. You mustn't take too long, or you'll run out of conductor-paint and you'll be done for. If you manage to beat this stage, move on to . . .

THE ELECTROCOMPUTER

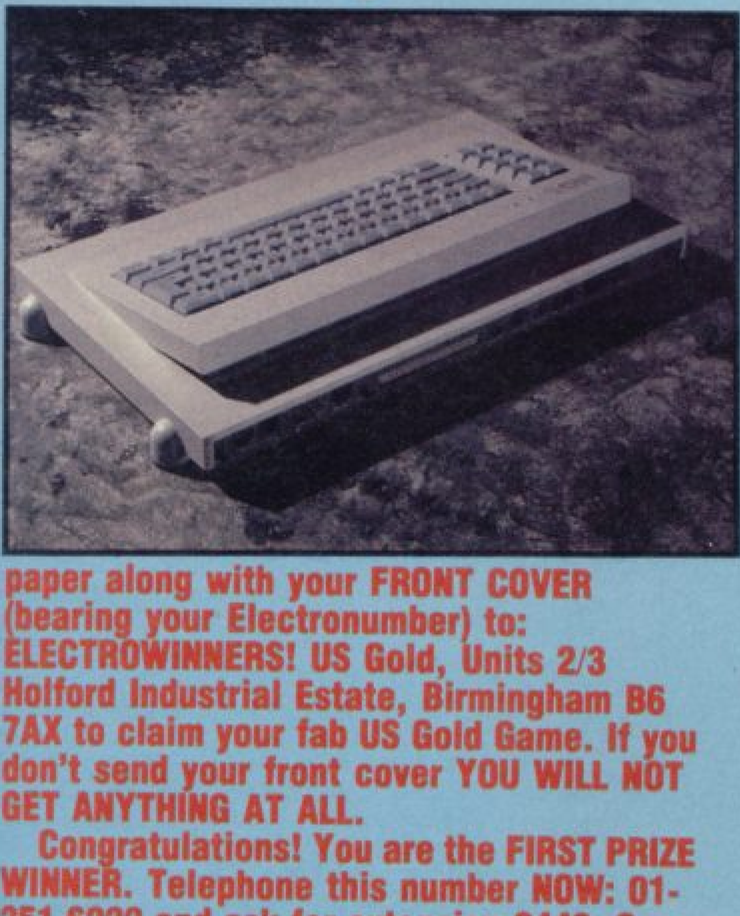
You've fought through the game and now the excitement really begins. Using the cursor, point to each character in turn of the Electronumber on the front cover of your issue. This month it will begin with the letter "A". Once you have pointed at your number, press ENTER to type it into the Electrocomputer. Once your full number is in correctly, move the cursor over the back-arrow symbol and hit ENTER again. The computer will then check to see if you have won a prize.

Are you one of this month's winners? No? Well don't panic.

AAATAPE!

AND DON'T THROW AWAY YOUR ISSUE. This number could still help you to win over the next two months.

Congratulations! You've won a runners up prize! In this event, send your name and address written CLEARLY on a piece of



paper along with your FRONT COVER (bearing your Electronumber) to: ELECTROWINNERS! US Gold, Units 2/3 Holford Industrial Estate, Birmingham B6 7AX to claim your fab US Gold Game. If you don't send your front cover YOU WILL NOT GET ANYTHING AT ALL.

Congratulations! You are the FIRST PRIZE WINNER. Telephone this number NOW: 01-251 6222 and ask for extension 2448. Once you're put through, we'll take your name and address and organise your super prize.

THE ELECTROPRIZES!

The 250 runners up will each receive a super full price US Gold game.

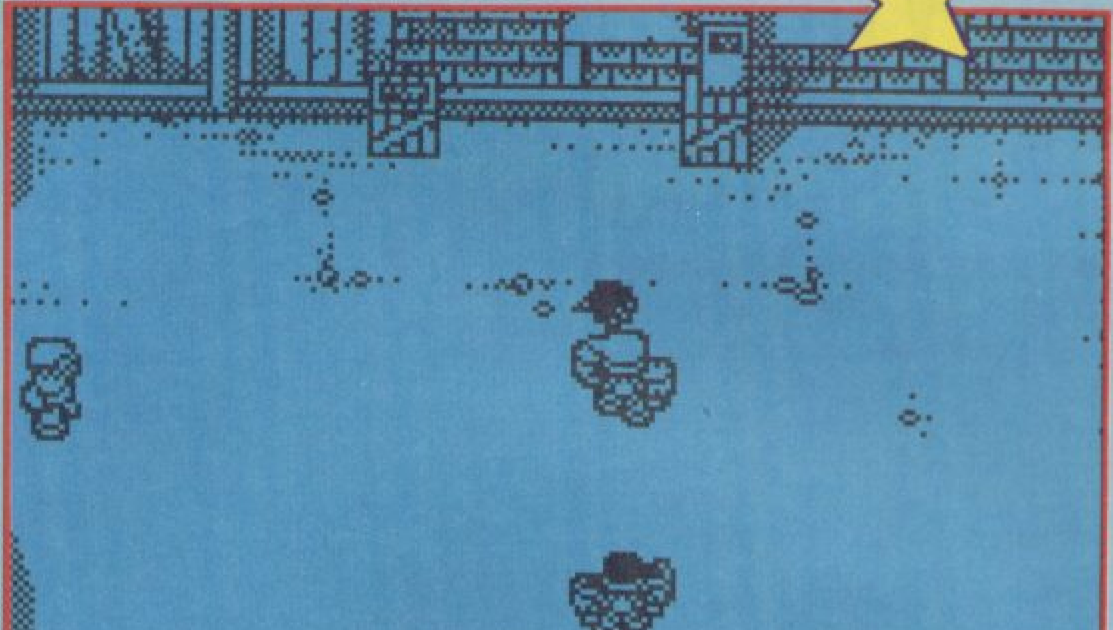
The lucky first prize winner will win a fantastic SAM SUPERCOMPUTER from Miles Gordon Technology, a machine capable of amazing ST-like graphics and speed.

What every Spectrum user needs to know about MGT's SAM Coupe.

- You've spent all your hard earned cash building up your software library. No problem. With the Coupe most of your games are still going to work.
- But with the Coupe's 64-colour palette, you'll be able to choose your own colour scheme for your existing games. Just imagine what you can do! Night-time versions of day-time games, ships ploughing across deserts instead of oceans, heroes painted a sickly puce . . . let your imagination run riot.
- You think 16 bit graphics are good. But you can't tell them apart from the Coupe. Every single pixel on your screen – that's almost 100,000 tiny points of phosphor – can be programmed for colour. Just think what software writers are going to do with 32 times the Spectrum's resolution.
- Speed! MGT have actually had to slow the Coupe down to be able to work with current software. At full speed, the Coupe runs nearly twice as fast as the Spectrum – just watch the colour flood the screen. You think a PC-AT is fast? You won't.
- What sort of shape are your finger nails in after waiting for your Spectrum games to load? Fire your manicurist. With the Coupe's super slim-line new disc drives, you can load software in just a few seconds.
- But maybe you like the taste of finger nails. Well, you don't have to go for a disc drive straight away. You can use a cassette recorder first and upgrade any time you like later on. Just slide those drives in. (And if you've got a Plus D or DISCIPLE you're already on the way to a Coupe disc drive system now.)
- 48K games aren't bad, 128K games are better – but how about 256K? That's what you get with the Coupe. If power is what turns you on, you can plug in up to 512K.
- Come out of the closet! There you are in your bedroom, just you and your Speccy playing together. Not any more. With the Coupe's on board network, you and your computer can go out into the world and challenge someone else and their computer. Think about it: you're trying to shoot someone up, they're trying to shoot you down, and your instructions are coming from a different machine back at H.Q. This is the real world.
- Music to your ears. 6-channel stereo sound with an audio headphone socket. And a full midi implementation to compete with the best. Rock on, SAM
- SCART. What? SCART. It's the standard the latest TVs use to give you monitor like resolution that's what. It's the standard the Coupe uses too – but there's still a normal TV socket for all you old fogies.



MEGAAAATAPE



ELECTRO BINGO

● Strange name for a computer – the Coupe, isn't it? Maybe, but Coupe means power, speed and style. And we mean STYLE. This is a computer for the 1990's for all your 1990 kids.

● MGT support – it's all part of the service. No matter where you buy, Coupe users will get a direct line through to MGT. So what? So have you ever tried talking over a problem with any other manufacturer?

● The punchline? Price. At £150.00 for the basic model MGT's computer isn't just desirable, it's affordable. Can you bear to wait until September?

THE ELECTROLAWYERS!

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SCENARIO . . . Snide Gantree is up to his old tricks yet again, his evil band of mercenaries have over-run our top secret South Pacific Airforce base. In less than five hours, Snide's men will have hacked the targeting computers controlling the base's cruise missiles. Our only hope is to send in the TaskFoce, an extremely manouevrable jet fighter equipped with a devastating payload of missiles, heat seekers, powerful bouncing bombs, impact mines and orbitals.

CONTROLS . . .
Thrust: Joystick up or thrust key.
Fly Left: Joystick left or left key.
Fly Right: Joystick right or right key.
Fire Blasters: Tap joystick fire button or tap fire key.
Fire Selected Weapon: Hold down joystick fire or hold down fire key.
Select Weapon: Pull down on joystick or select key.



TASK FORCE

This month's playable demo is Task Force from Players. It's a bloody stonker.

UK PRICE . . . 8 bit versions £2.99 PLAYERS PREMIER.

RELEASE . . . Commodore 64 Street date: APRIL. Spectrum 48/128 Street date: APRIL. Amstrad CPC Street date: Out Soon.

CONVERSIONS . . . No other conversions planned.

FEATURES . . . ★ TaskForce is set inside a massive fortress and includes a large number of mapable rooms, caves and tunnels, featuring brilliant techno-military backdrops by Richard Beston. ★ Large numbers of enemy aircraft and missiles on screen at any one time. ★ Exciting arcade style action. ★ Amazing in game effects and great music. ★ Joe Blade style sub-game puzzle. ★ A unique range of bolt on weaponry.

STREET CRED FOOTBALL

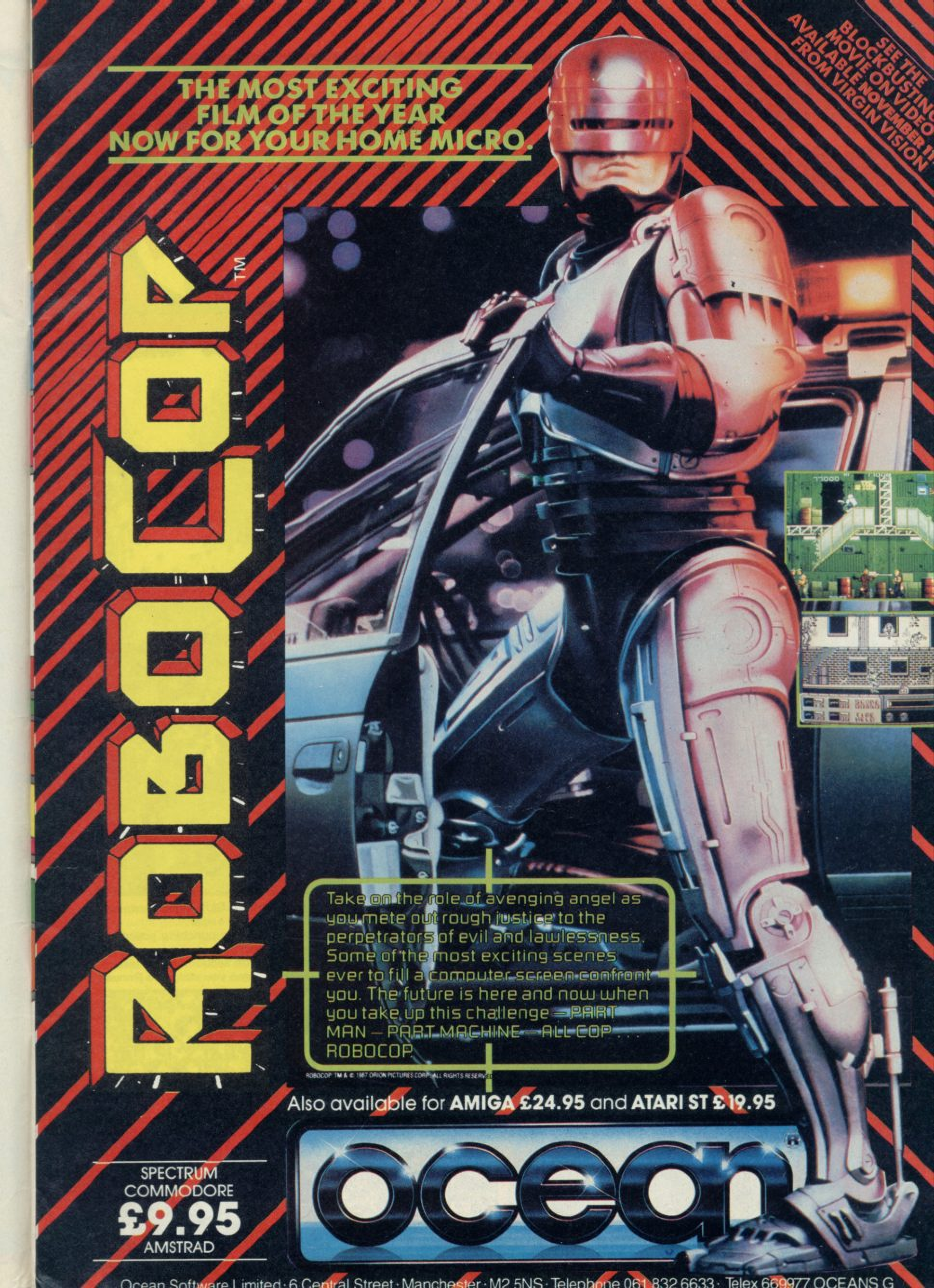
And just as a bonus, we've got shots of Street Cred Footy for you too.

THE GAME . . . STREET CRED FOOTBALL: An excellent 5 a side street soccer simulation. Select your crack side from 24 different, tough street-wise city kids. SCF features an authentic smooth scrolling pitch, great effects and realistic footy action.

FEATURES . . . ★ Special guest appearance of JOE BLADE. ★ Realistic monochrome street-scene pitch, two screen high, full screen width scrolling. ★ Full simultaneous two player option alternatively compete against the computer or watch the Computer vs Computer demo mode. ★ Each player may select a team of five characters from a total of 24 different characters. Colin Swinbourne has drawn 32 * 32 pixel portraits of all 24 characters: The character who is in possession of the ball is shown at the bottom of the screen. ★ You are given the option to alter the initial positions of each of your five players at the start of each game.

CREDITS . . . Spectrum version was written by Andy Severn (Powerplay and Blob the Cop, SU megatpe), with graphics by Colin Swinbourne (Joe Blade, Joe Blade 2, Shanghai Karate/Warriors and Deviants).

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GAMES REVIEW!

RED

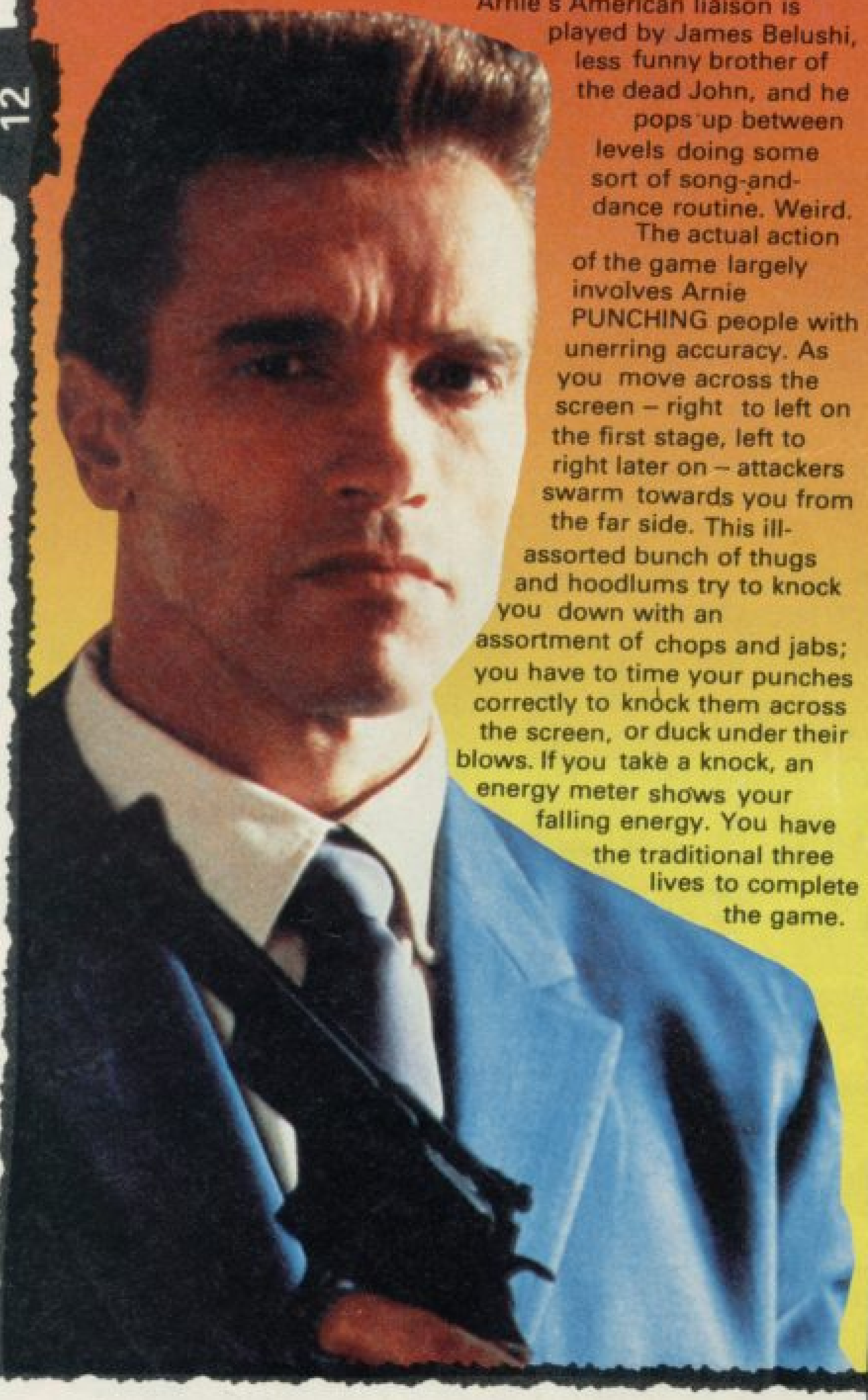


He's big. He's mean. He's got a spikey haircut. But that's enough about Jim – what about the game he commanded me to review, **Red Heat**?

The latest in a long line of Arnie Schwarzenegger movie conversions – remember **Predator, Running Man,** and, er, that's it really – **Red Heat** sticks pretty closely to the plot of the fillum, in which a Russian cop (**Red Heat,** geddit?) comes to America to track down a ruthless gang of drug smugglers who've offed his partner. Arnie's character is SO HARD that he can juggle hot coals, punch thousands of people and shoot his huge pistol dozens of times without ruffling his startling spikey haircut, and this aspect of the film is well represented in the game.



Oh, we forgot to mention, Arnie's American liaison is played by James Belushi, less funny brother of the dead John, and he pops up between levels doing some sort of song-and-dance routine. Weird.

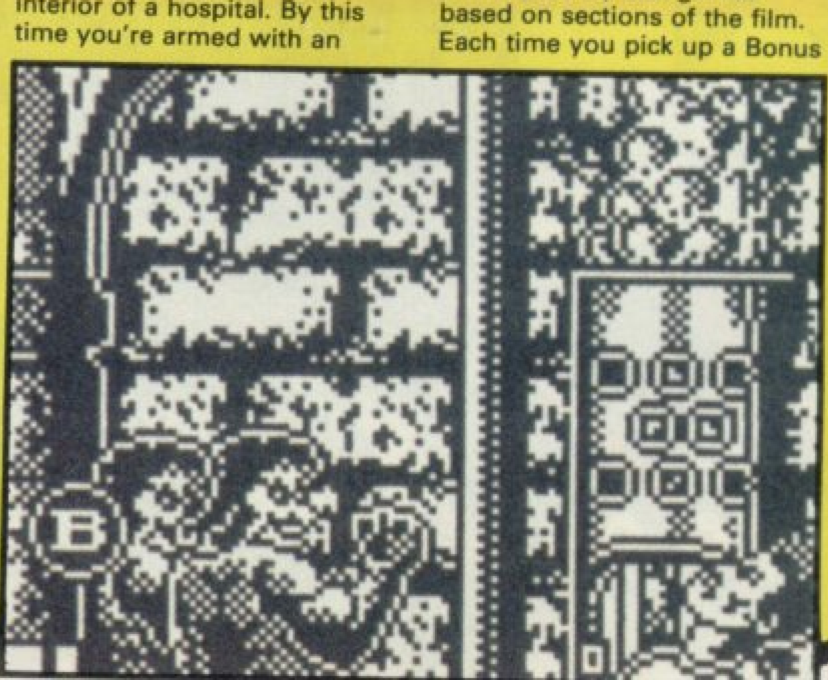


The actual action of the game largely involves Arnie PUNCHING people with unerring accuracy. As you move across the screen – right to left on the first stage, left to right later on – attackers swarm towards you from the far side. This ill-assorted bunch of thugs and hoodlums try to knock you down with an assortment of chops and jabs; you have to time your punches correctly to knock them across the screen, or duck under their blows. If you take a knock, an energy meter shows your falling energy. You have the traditional three lives to complete the game.



As you progress, the scenery changes from the opening scene in the bath-house to a Moscow winter, then to the interior of a hospital. By this time you're armed with an enormous GUN, which certainly makes life easier.

The main punching action is interrupted by sub-games based on sections of the film. Each time you pick up a Bonus



HEAT

GAMES REVIEW!





FAX BOX

ARCADE REVIEW

RED HEAT Label: **Ocean** Author: **Special FX** Price: **£8.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various**

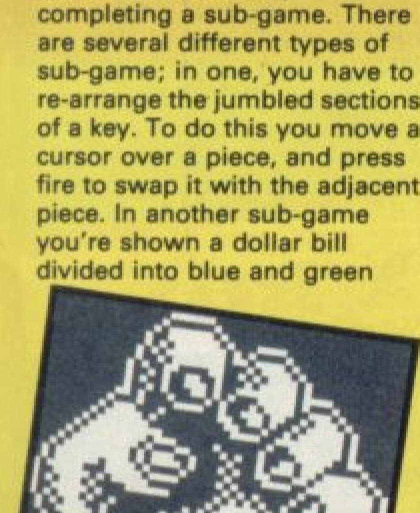
Straightforward licence of the all-action Arnie cop film

GRAPHICS	SOUND
78	56
78	79
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Reviewer: [signature]

OVERALL **78**

token you have a chance to score extra points by completing a sub-game. There are several different types of sub-game; in one, you have to re-arrange the jumbled sections of a key. To do this you move a cursor over a piece, and press fire to swap it with the adjacent piece. In another sub-game you're shown a dollar bill divided into blue and green squares. By moving the joystick in different directions you can make different selections of squares change colour. The aim is to make them all turn green.



For joystick-wagglers there's a sub-game in which Arnie's fist squeezes a hot coal – waggle like mad to get the waggleometer up to the top.

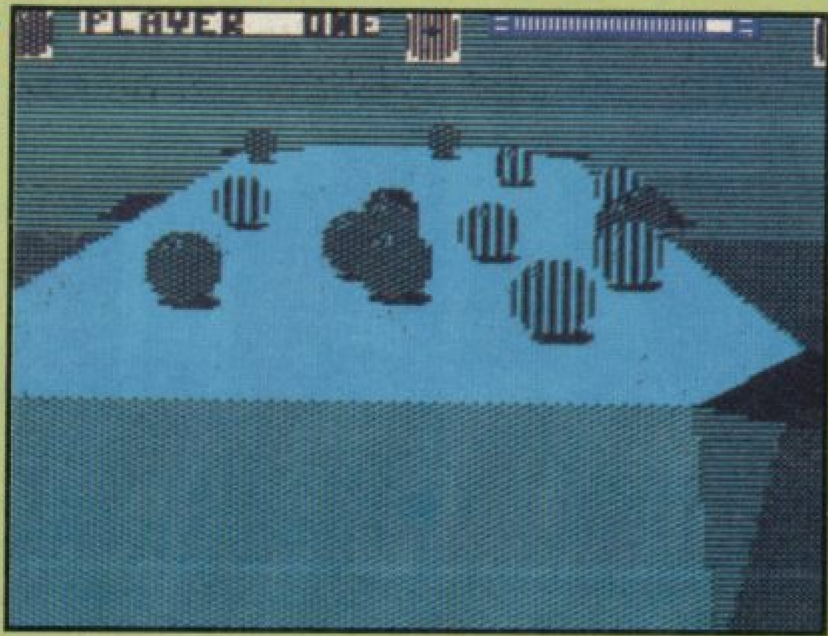
My favourite sub-game shows a selection of three doors, which pop open in turn to reveal either gun-toting thugs, or innocent bystanders such as doggies, schoolgirls and naken women (?!?) The aim is to gun down the thugs and avoid shooting the bystanders, but the temptation is to shoot the lot. Each sub-game is, of course, played against a time limit.

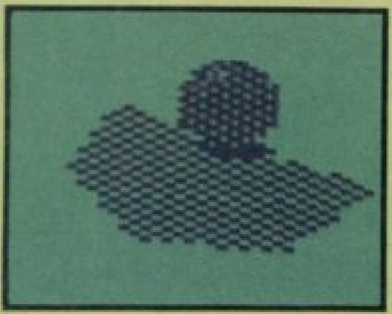
The final aim is to confront and eliminate the arch baddie in a scene of such awesome wonderfulness that we haven't actually seen it. After all, completing all the sub-games to finish the game is a mammoth task.

Red Heat is most notable for its excellent comic-style graphics. Though they're monochrome, the animation and design are excellent, and because you're only shown Arnie's top half, it gives an impression of great size. ■



3-D POOL





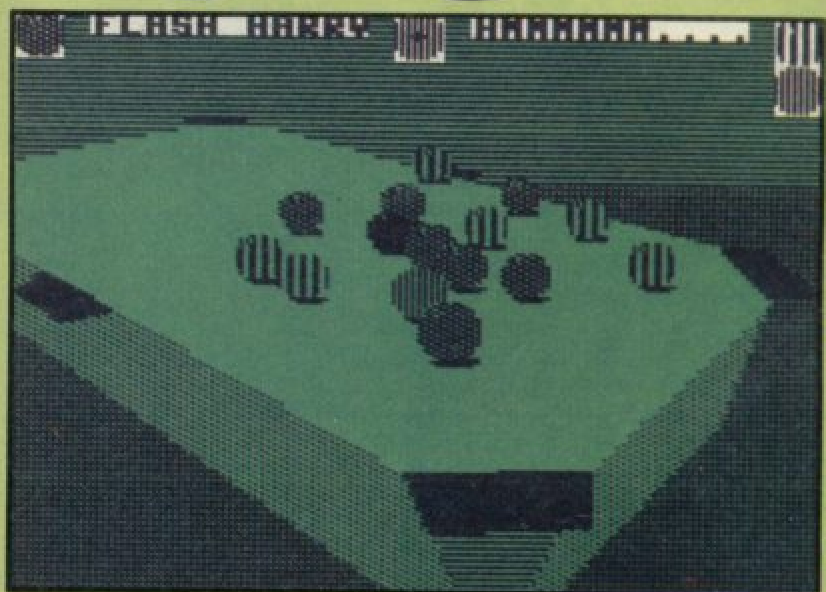
3D Pool is easily the most enjoyable game I've ever seen all month. It's neither graphically excellent, nor full of fast nail-biting action, but it's got playability that outstrips every other game.

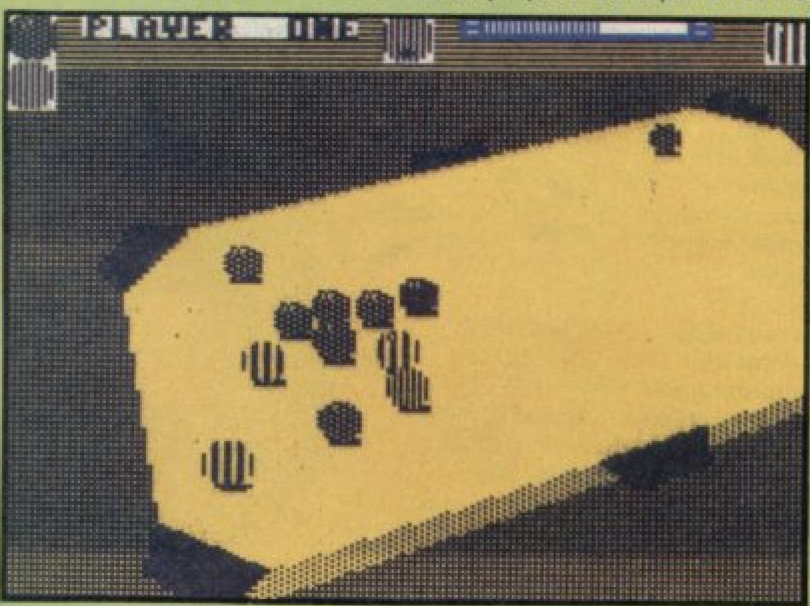
There have been a few pool games around in the past, but all have fallen down in various respects. Many had slightly tacky control methods, from the very early simulations that asked what angle you wished to cue the ball, and how hard (a pool shot comprises more than two parameters) up to even relatively "advanced" programs with extendable cues and accurate representations of the table set-up.

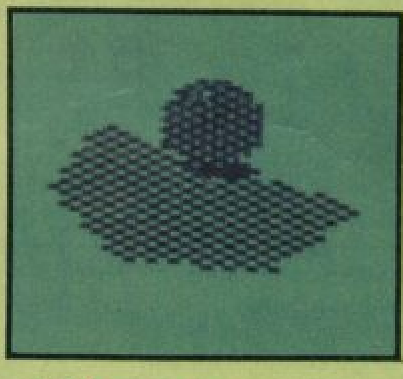
Not so here! Although the initial visual representation is pretty poor – the screen is green and black with horrific stripey balls and cross-hatching (about the only graphics system designed specifically not for use on the Spectrum). If you can stand to accustom yourself to this visual nightmare, the game shines through magnificently.

Before we get onto the play itself, I'll explain the periperal factors. You can play against a friend or an ever-improving succession of computer-controlled players, from people like Cak-handed Kevin to Hustley Harold. You can even set up trick shots to impress the ladies.

The rules of pool are simple. Each player tries to pot all of his balls (either red or yellow/ stripes or spots) and then the black. He mustn't pot the cue ball or his opponent's, or he fouls and gives away two shots.









Onto the game. This is where it becomes clear that the 3D factor of the game is far from a cheap gimmick. It's essential to the control of the shots. You can zoom in and out to get a better look at the table. You can walk around to check out possible shots, and you can stand up or crouch down too. Once you've chosen which ball you want to go for, it's a question of lining up your cue-ball; it always moves dirctly away from your position. Then you've got to decide which part of the ball to hit; this affects spin and screw – which way the ball bounces and how it behaves after hitting other balls. Finally you determine the strength of the shot. You've to more control in **3D Pool** than almost any other sim. It's also a more realistic feel, simply because of the way you view the table.

Once the shot has been set up, tapping ENTER will play it. You can walk around the table all the time to check how successful you have been.

If you're anything other than diametrically opposed to the concept of Pool, this is a definite must-buy, iffy graphics aside. A corker! ■

ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

3D POOL *Label:* **Telecomsoft** *Author:* **In-house** *Price:* **£7.95** *Memory:* **48K/128K** *Joystick:* **Various**

GRAPHICS	SOUND
69	60
90	90
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Brilliant Pool sim. You need never go to the pub again.

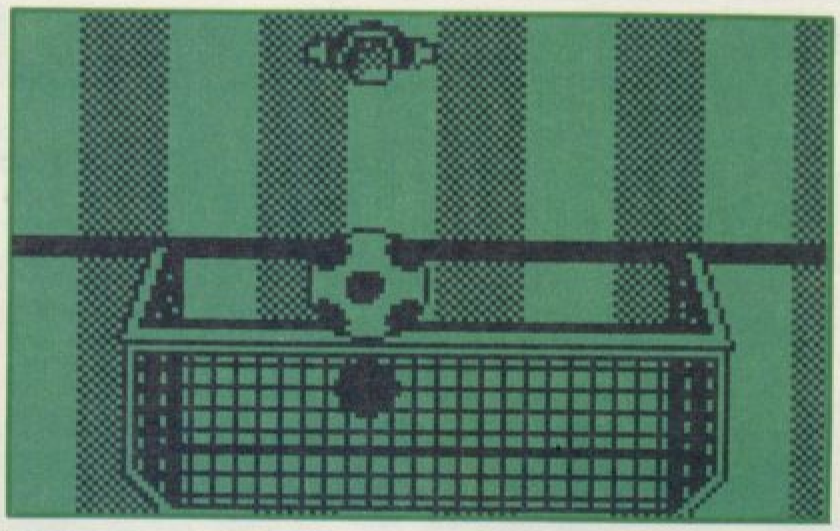
Reviewer: Jim Douglas

OVERALL 89

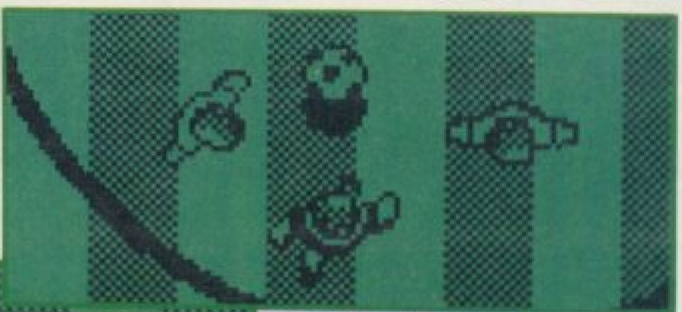
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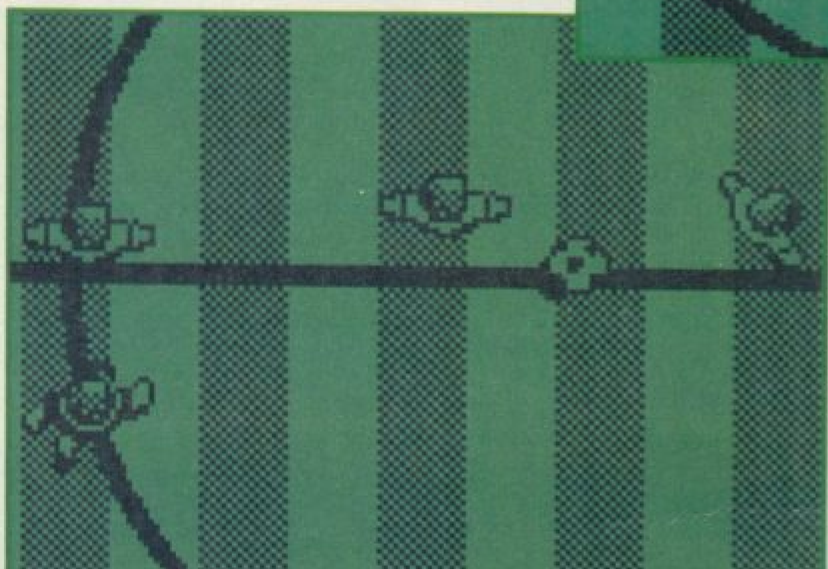
MICROPROSE SOCCER



Microprose Soccer was originally an uncommissioned game developed by Sensible Software, who then, after producing the Commodore 64 version and seeing what a hot product it was, looked around for a buyer. This came in the form of US sim giants Microprose who then released the game late last year to huge critical acclaim. (Well, me and Gary Whitta liked it). So, here's the Spectrum version at last, after only six months of waiting. How has it converted?



Not brilliantly. The original version relied prominently on the machine's hardware scrolling and sprites, along with the choice of colours. The Spectrum has none of these features available, and so you can't expect the game to be as good.



You get two games for your money, on a double sided cassette or disk. First is **Microsoccer,** the full blown soccer adventure and on the B-side you get six-a-side indoor soccer.

You can play either a two player firendly, a league with a few of your firends (up to 16 players in total) and start a world championship, with up to 16 human opponents and the rest of the 29 teams controlled by computer. Then you have all the finer options to choose from, such as controls action replays on/off, weather on/off (more later), banana shot power and match length.

So, what's the actual game like. Well, it's an overhead view eight-way scroller with large graphics. That's fine, nothing wrong with that. Now, let's start taking it apart. First point, the scrolling. It's not very smooth. It's actually downright jerky which is already a detraction from the action.

Then you have the size of the graphics. Well, they are very attractive and very well defined. The animation is fair enough, but because of the size in comparison to the size of the playing area, it means you can't see very much of the game. Also, because the graphics are large, detailed and monochrome, there are problems when it comes to telling which player is which. I found it difficult to discern which players belonged to my team and then to add insult to injury, I had to try and work out which player I was controlling.

The problem is that there is little distinction between the three, and that's what spoils a great game. It looks great, but it just doesn't play very well. In a fast moving match against the computer, it's just a little difficult to keep up with what's actually going on, and I must say, most of the time it seems like you don't actually have a player on screen. This isn't very good at all.

But it's not all bad. The game does feature a lot of things that are interesting, if not revolutionary. The action replays, for one. After a goal is scored, the screen turns white and whizzes back through the the last ten seconds of the game, and shows the goal in slow motion. Also, you can choose banana power. This is the amount of curve you can give a ball, and when set to high, you can kick the ball through 180°. A handy trick indeed.

Microprose Soccer has become the standard by which all others are set on the 64, and fool that I am, I hoped for the same for the Z80, but alas it was not to be■

ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

MICROPROSE SOCCER *Label:* ***Microprose*** *Author:* ***Smart Egg Softare*** *Price:* ***£9.99*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Sinclair/Keys***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
74	70
56	72
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Poor translation of an exceptionally good football game. Disappointing.

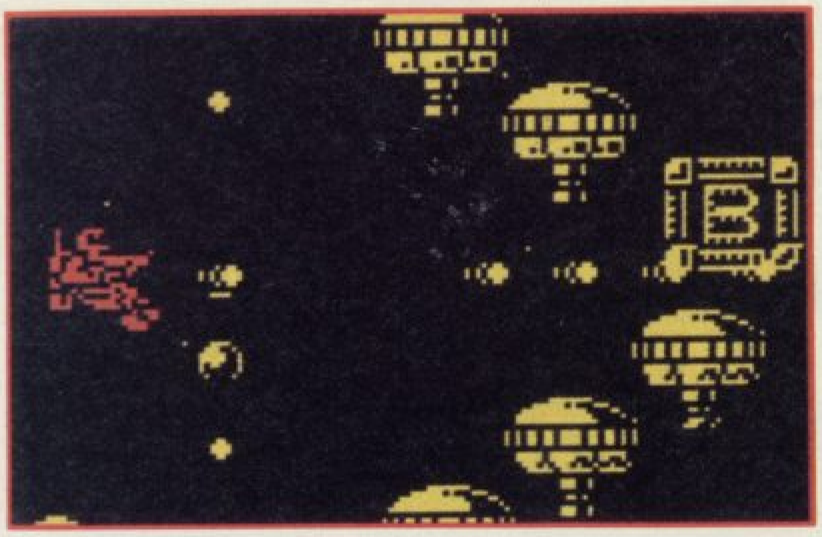
Reviewer: Tony Dillon

OVERALL **75**





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ZYB

Greetings, puny Earthman. I expect you're sitting smugly in your armchair drinking Tizer and watching **Motormouth,** congratulating yourself because you've routed **R-Type,** battered **Blasteroids** and flogged **Forgotten Worlds**. You feel like the Master of the Universe, don't you? Well, I've got a shock for you. A nasty shock.

Imagine you're a condemned criminal trying to escape from an alien Death Row. You have a weapon, you have an escape route – but the way to freedom lies through the dreaded Czokan System (Oh no! Not the Czokan System!). As you make your break for freedom, you find yourself on the first of many levels, Arcturus. From now on, only fast reactions can save you from death at the hands of the most horrible horde of alien slime you've ever encountered!

You have one advantage over your pathetic predecessors. Your weapon fires automatically and continuously – you don't even have to hold down the fire button. So what's the fire button for, you might ask? Foolish Earthling. It's to change your weapon selection.

As you fly through space against a scrolling star background, flights of aliens weave towards you. Eliminate them and they leave behind different tokens which add to

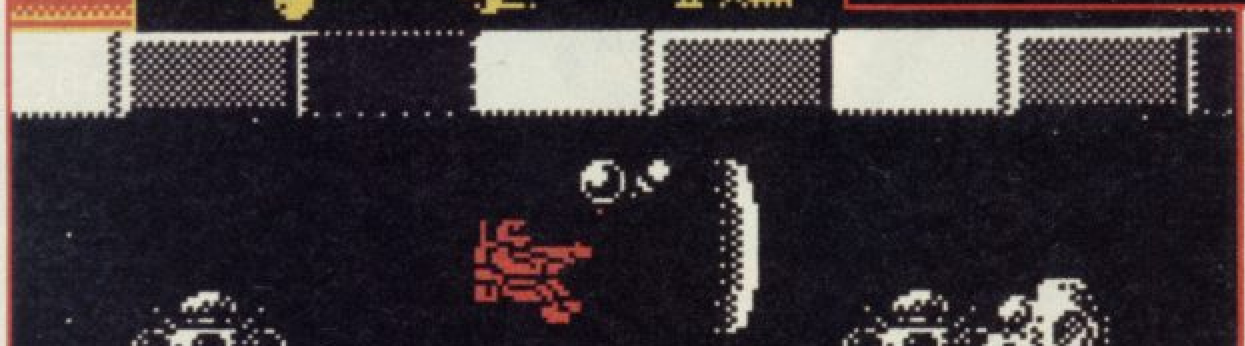


the power of your weapons. You can collect up to four for each type, and with each step the weapon becomes more fiercesome. The Bullet Gun finally delivers a constant stream of missiles; the 8-Way shoots in all directions; the Pulse fires a combination of bullets and beams; the Wall is a broad slab of destructive energy; and the Rail Gun builds into an unstoppable rod of force.

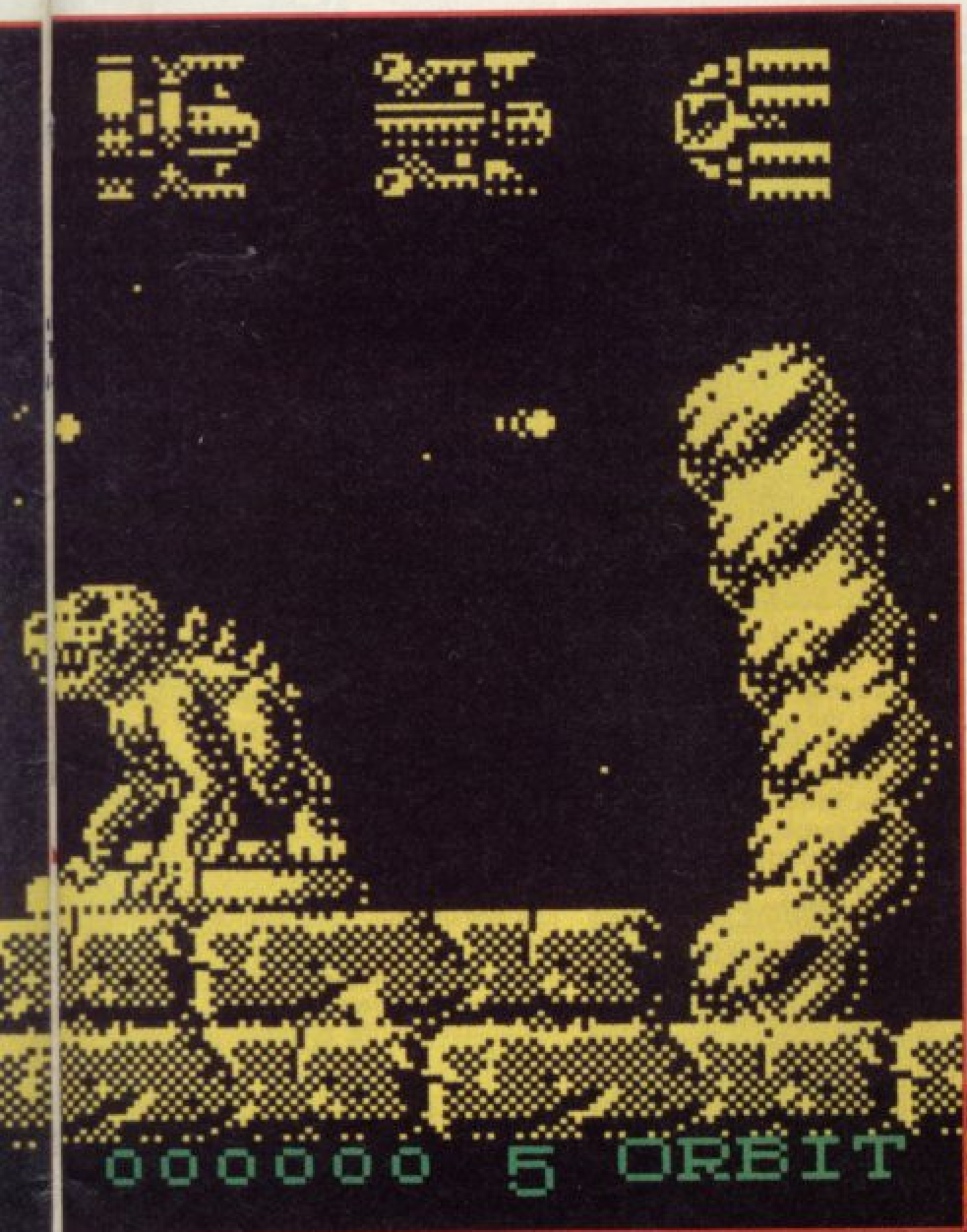
All the aliens can be destroyed, except for the fireballs and asteroids. The trick is to select the right weapon for

HINTS AND TIPS

- **Try and stay in the middle of the left hand side of the screen. This will give you the best chance of eliminating a whole wave of aliens, though it makes you vulnerable to attacks from behind (fyak!).**
- **Select the bullet gun or rail gun to wipe out fast-moving lines of aliens attacking along the centre of the screen.**
- **After losing a life, use your few seconds of invulnerability to collect tokens and weapons which lie on top of backgrounds.**
- **Don't fail to pick up bonus lives (spacesuits) – you'll need them!**
- **Always aim for the centre of the aliens – they aren't vulnerable anywhere else.**
- **Remember you don't have to complete the levels in order – it might be tempting to tackle the easier ones first, but will it gain you any bonus lives?**









each attack wave; choose wrongly, and you'll be pounded to spacedust, with a few seconds' invulnerability your only consolation. You'll also lose a grade from your current weapon status.

At the end of each level is a command ship, the firepower of which is awesome. Aim for its head if you hope to defeat it, pick up a teleport token and proceed to the next level.

In the intermediate screen you may choose which level you tackle next, but the restricted levels require a number of special tokens to be picked up. As your mother ship picks you up to whisk you away to the next level, you can speculate with terror on what you may find; vast pyramids guarded by tubular starships, rocky asteroids surrounded by hideous demons, or technological towers infested by missile units. It may be that you will never fight your way through to the final level, Zybex, unless you recruit the aid of a fellow prisoner; in two-player mode, you may have some chance of coming through this trial unscathed. But not MUCH chance . . .

Fab colours. Brain-numbing sound. Non-stop action. What more can you ask for a shoot-'em-up? Perhaps you want it to be on a flashy coin-op conversion label? Well, it isn't. It's from Zeppelin, the people responsible for the 1988 budget game of the year, **Draconus**. Perhaps you want to pay £8.95 for it? Well you don't need to. Perhaps you want to be frog-marched to the shop and forced to buy it at the point of a blaster? Surely that won't be necessary, Earthling . . .■

ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

ZYBEX *Label:* ***Zeppelin*** *Author:* ***Gareth Briggs*** *Price:* ***£2.99*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
79	60
99	90
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

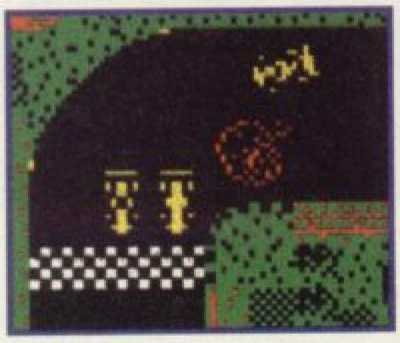
Brilliant space shoot-'em-up; buy it or choke on space-dust

Reviewer:

OVERALL **95**

GAMES REVIEW!

GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR 2



"Get that motor running, get out on the highway". Well, not quite. In fact the only relevance that the Steppenwolf goldie oldie has to Codemaster's latest offering is that it has something to do with cars and that for some reason, it just will not lie down and die.

Grand Prix Simulator strikes back revenge of the return 2 with added enhanced features is the Oliver Twins attempt at making a good game (Grand Prix Simulator, 80%) a better one. They haven't failed, but I don't quite think they've hit the mark they were aiming for.

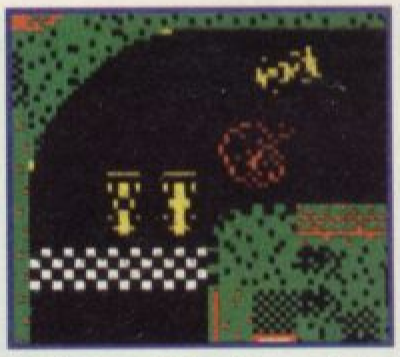
First of all, let's take a look at the original formula. Three cars race around one of a large number of tracks. Any number of the three cars can be controlled by human competitors. The aim is to get around three laps of the track within a time limit. The time you have left at the end of a race is carried forward into the next, building your time limit up for the next race, and sometimes you haven't a hope of completing a race without it.

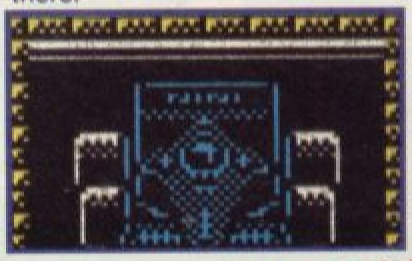
That's the basic game. What have Philip and Andrew added to 'enhance it'? Well, firstly the game now features intertia, which means that no longer can you just drive around a corner, you have to 'powerslide' around it, which basically means skidding at high speed.



The second feature they've added is the damageometer. The more hits you take, be it through crashing into the side of the track or in collision with another vehicle, the more the damageometer rises. If it reaches maximum, you lose control, crash into the side of the track and are out of the running. Oh well.

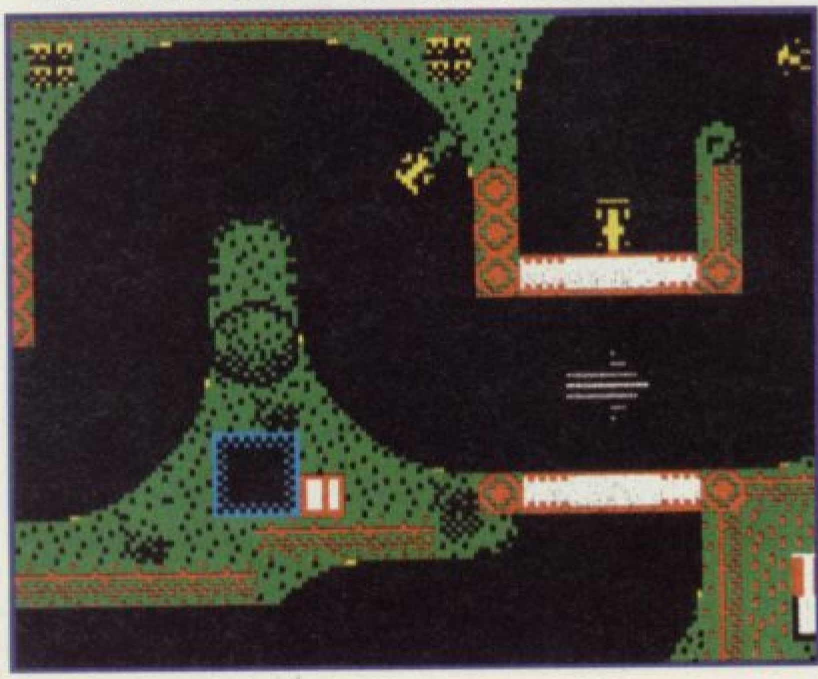
The graphics have been improved, the green boxes of the original have been replaced by finely detailed racing machines. The track looks more or less the same, apart from the addition of a bridge here and there.





The sound is quite good. A tune rattles away in the background and the engine rumbles. The cars scream around corners, and there is some pretty clear speech at the start of the race, but that's about it. Then again, how many more effects could you fit into 48K?

You want to know what it is about this game that I don't like? The controls aren't quite responsive enough and your car skids just a little too much. That is what makes it a little on the umplayable side, and that's the whole reason why I have had to drop the overall mark. It just doesn't play very well, and it's that that has solely managed to completely eliminate the fun of a multiplayer game. Shame really■



FAX BOX

ARCADE REVIEW

GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR 2 Label: **Code Masters** Author: **The Oliver Twins** Price: **£1.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various**

Not a brilliant improvement over the original.

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY	OVERALL
79	85	64	66	72



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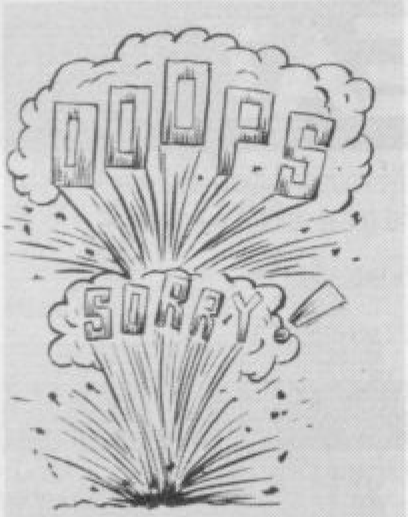
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Can't you and your mates from SU get a simple thing right like making a decent Megatape? **Operation Wolf** was cool, **Blobocop** was not bad, **Xenon** was brilliant and **Phantom Club** might have bee the best if the *"/#£&$! tape had loaded! Me and my mate Derry Killchrist (Oh yeah, I know old Derry – WS) who wrote in with me about **Bear a Grudge** (or "Can You Bear a Crud") loaded up "Will it be totally awesome?" **Phantom Club** – I'LL NEVER KNOW!

So unless I fork out £1.60 for another SU I won't get to play Megatape 13, will I? So cough up the dosh or else deal with me and Derry!

Paul Night
Peterborough

● *OO-ER! I DON'T WANT TO TANGLE WITH A COUPLE OF HARDOS LIKE YOU AND DERRY (PARTICULARLY DERRY) SO I'LL TELL YOU WHAT WE'VE BEEN TELLING EVERYONE WITH FAULTY MEGATAPES FOR MONTHS – GET IN TOUCH WITH THE DUPLICATORS (YOU'LL FIND THEIR DETAILS ON THE MEGATAPE PAGE) AND THEY'LL SEND YOU A NEW ONE. NOT THAT THERE'S ANYTHING WRONG WITH BUYING TWO COPIES OF SU – THEN YOU COULDLOOK AT BOTH SIDES OF A PAGE AT THE SAME TIME!*

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears. On second thoughts don't, they're probably full of wax. Anyway, it has come to my attention that everyone is picking on Kami. AND I DON'T LIKE IT!!! So if you don't stop – I'm going to come round and blow your heads off!

And as for Dildoid, he can shove his heavy metal up his **** 'cos he's a girlie and I HATE girlies. He's always making cock-ups, and he never gets his reviews right. And then there's ugly mug Jenkins, God he's a wimp. But Jimbo, now there's a man, he's like me, really witty, intelligent and good looking (but not as good looking as me!)

Bring back Tamara please! AND if you're nice to Kami I'll take the safety pin from my coat and mountains will turn to mashed potatoes, seas of gravy will flood the land and the world will become one giant meatball! Yours madly, George the fluffy dice

Lee Mulgrew
Hartlepool

● *HOW CAN YOU BE SO NASTY TO ALL THOSE LOVELY LOVELY SU PEOPLE? TONE'S A REAL STUD, CHRIS IS STUNNINGLY WITTY AND JIM, AS YOU SAY, IS BRUTALLY HANDSOME. I'M JUST VERY HONOURED TO BE ABLE TO BREATHE THE SAME AIR AS THEM. I THINK YOU'RE A BIT CRACKERS THOUGH, AREN'T YOU MATE?*

Dear cretinous ball of bumfluff (if you're back from the asylum that is), I claim to be the first to finish your Megatape 13 adventure **Escacpe**, at about 9.20 on the 16th of February I escaped from the room and was rewarded with the words "well done", what I want to know now is how much dosh do I get, and when will I get it? Secondly who the ??!!@@?&&@@£@ hell is this Wayne Smedley? Lastly, who is the chonga in the SU T-shirt ad?

PS We do want to see the bear in future, not 'cos we like him but because my little sister fancies him and will moan if he doesn't return.

PPS Tamara Howard was the greatest reviewer since Chris "Lunchbreaks" Bourne (??!??) – I just love that razor sharp feminine (??) wit.

Simon Field
Ferndown

● *SORRY – KAMI ISN'T OUT OF HOSPITAL YET, SO YER MATE WAYNE'S FILLING IN! YOU'RE EVER SO CLEVER SOLVING* ESCAPE *– ONLY AROUND 11,000 OTHER PEOPLE HAVE COMPLETED IT SO FAR! I CAN'T GET ANYWHERE WITH IT. MIND YOU, I WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO GET STUCK IN THE GOBLIN'S DUNGEON IN THE* HOBBIT. *THE CHONGA IN THE AD IS TONY DILLON – HE'S MY MATE! TONE AND ME GET ON JUST GREAT. I REALLY ADMIRE HIM, SO DON'T LET'S HAVE A WORD SAID AGAINST HIM. AS FOR TAMARA – ROOOOR, WASN'T SHE SMASHING! BUT SHE'S GONE FOR EVER, AND WE'RE STUCK WITH THAT WITCH ALISON. OWWWWW! ALISON – STOP TWISTING MY ANORAK HOOD!*

Dear Wayne, I can't think of a better way to tell you how wonderful your mag is than by writing a poem.

Sinclair User is at the top
Other mags are a total flop
Pity about that stupid Bear
All he is is a ball of hair
It's just about time for me to go
But I just want to let you know
Sinclair User is so cool
That when I read it I dribble and drool.

David Robison
Huddersfield

● *COOOOOOR, DAVE, THAT'S REELY GREAT! I WISH I COULD WRITE POEMS LIKE THAT! HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT OF TEAMING UP WITH STOCK, AITKEN AND WATERMAN AND MAKING A FAB HIT RECORD? THEN YOU COULD BE ON WIDE AWAKE CLUB WITH TIMMY MALLET!*

On Saturday 18th Feb I got out of bed at 3 o'clock (AM). I got up to make sure I got Sinclair User, hoping to find the solution of the so-called SU Classic **The Colour of Magic** (hah, what a joke), but it WAS NOT THERE. Why? Make sure it is in the next issue or my pet python will be having an eye to eye talk with you, GET IT?

C Greatbatch
Sheffield

● *WHAT WASN'T THERE? THE SINCLAIR USER? THE SOLUTION? THE PYTHON? SORRY, I DON'T UNDERSTAND. JIM SAYS I'M JUST THICK, BUT HE LIKES ME REALLY. DON'T YOU, JIM? JIM?*

The game is up! I'm going to give you the chance to explain why there are no pokes on Megatapes 12 and 13? Had Adrian "Hotpants" Singh sat in a bucket of water? And another thing (said very menacingly!) I am sick of SU ignoring **Dizzy**. Just because you Kings of Crud don't like it means I might be forced to move to Your Sinclair. AAARGHHH! Please persuade me not to move by printing some tips on **Treasure Island Dizzy**! Grovel, Grovel . . .

S Southworth
Blackpool



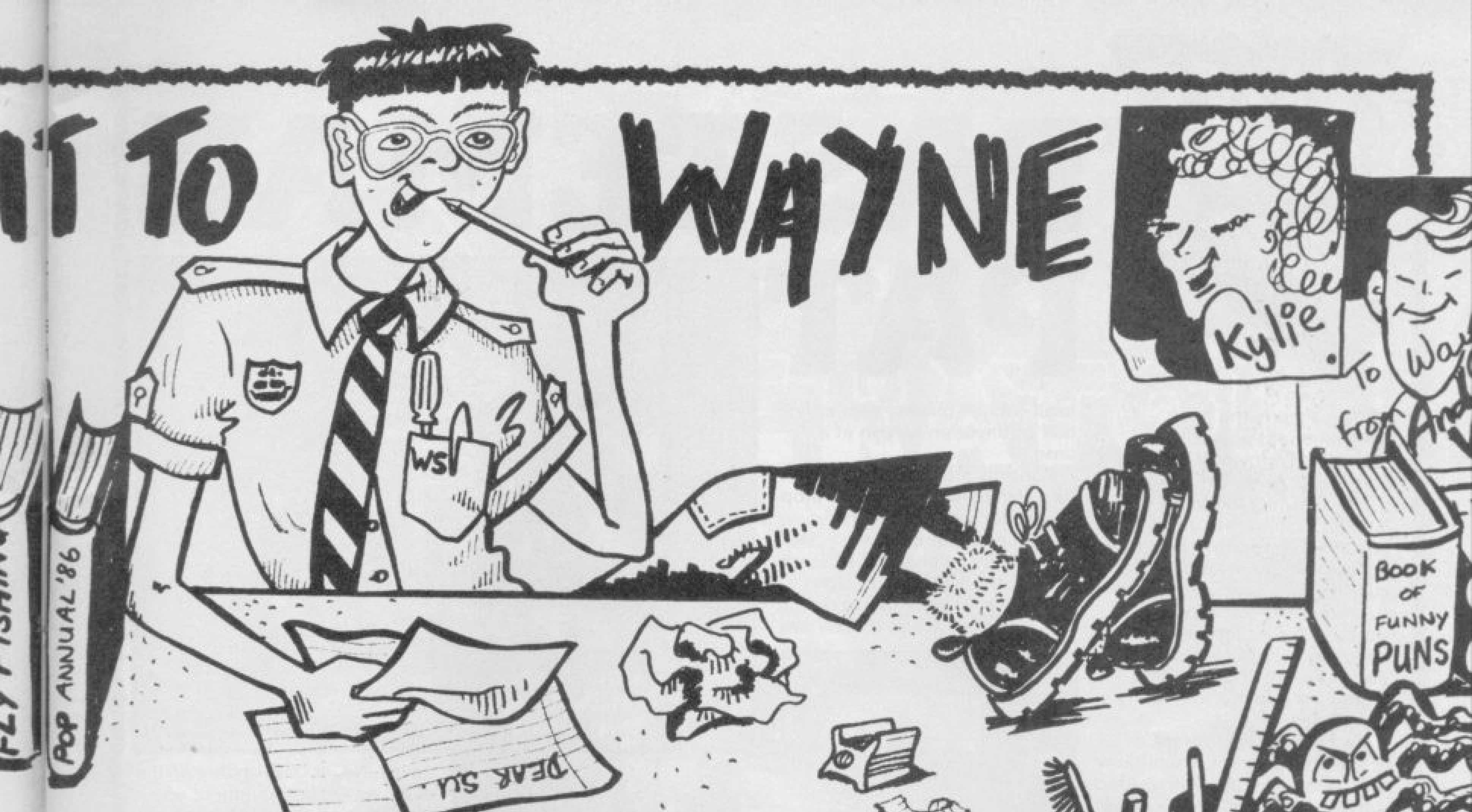
● *WELL, S (CAN I CALL YOU S?), HERE'S A TIP FOR* TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY *– DON'T PLAY IT, IT'S CRUD! HEEHEEHEE! ONLY JOKING, WE WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO DEFECT. TRY INSERTING THE SNORKEL INTO THE BANANA THEN TWISTING THE CAULIFLOWER AROUND YOUR HEAD WHILE YOU'RE IN THE TREEHOUSE (THIS IS NONSENSE, WAYNE – YOU ARE NOT GOING TO BE THE NEXT ADRIAN SINGH. YOU AREN'T EVEN GOING TO BE THE NEXT JON RIGLAR. UNLESS YOU PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, YOU WON'T EVEN BE THE NEXT WAYNE SMEDLEY – JD)*

Dear Kamikaze, it's a great pity you don't live up to your name (What – Mr Bear? – WS), 'cos then we might get some decent letters printed instead of a lot of drivel (Like this you mean? – JD)

It would be an improvement if compos were put on the back of adverts instead of reviews and features.

I'm sorry to hear you've had a nervous breakdown, but thankful that you don't live near enough to the hospital I work in. Well I'm off now to plan a farewell party (yours), anyway don't get well soon.

PS In case of recovery you're welcome to call around any



You got a comment? You got something to say? You got an opinion about what's good and bad. Wanna praise the mag? Wanna heap some indignation and kick a few butts? Don't keep it to yourself, just put your thoughts down on paper and TELL IT TO THE BEAR!

Kamikaze don't mess around. I'll print anything that got something to say with a name and address on it (No address no printy yellowbelly) you jus tell me all about it and send your message to 'Tell it to the Bear', SU Central, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU



time, and our dog will be only too pleased to remove your stuffing permanently.
PPS Perhaps you can call next month's letters "Stuff the Bear".
Carole Kraska
Middlesbrough

● YOU'RE COMPLETELY RIGHT ABOUT THE COMPOS, I ENTER EVERY COMPETITION IN EVERY ISSUE AND MY COPIES END UP LOOKING LIKE RAFFIA. I NEVER WIN ANYTHING THOUGH, JIM TEARS UP ALL MY COUPONS. I WOULDN'T UPSET THE BEAR LIKE THAT MISSUS – MIDDLESBROUGH ISN'T THAT FAR AWAY ON THE MOTORWAY, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE IN A JET FIGHTER.

I would like to congratulate you on your cool, superb magazine, but there's one small, teensy-weensy problem, why in £@/"@&$ does the cover come off every time I turn the page? Is it 1) I am an alien and covers don't like me? 2) The cover is an alien and aliens don like me? 3) You're a cheap sod and you're so mean you don't spend any money on keeping the cover on? Try and improve it or I'll come to your office and play a Des O'Connor record on your record player.
Andrew Milton
Romford

● OR IT COULD BE 4) YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR OWN STRENGTH AND YOU TEAR THE COVER OFF IN YOUR FRENZY TO SEE THE INSIDES OF THE FAB MAG. ACTUALLY I THINK IT'S 3) THOUGH. JIM WON'T LET US USE ANY GLUE (IN CASE THERE'S TROUBLE) AND SPENDING MORE ON STRONGER PAPER WOULD MEAN LESS FOR HIM TO SPEND ON THE DOGS.

I think your mag is amazing and cool, without it the world would be in ruins! The Megatapes are Megacool, the Previews are Perfect, the Reviews are Revealing, the Mag is 'Mazing (Uuuurghhhh – WS) and the Posters are Phenomenal. You are great (so please print this). Everyone/thing in the mag is great except Jenkins (of course). I am not doing this for the cash, but for a ten quid cheque (ha ha). But everything I say is true (especially the bit about Jenkins). If not then you can blast me with a bazooka!
Chris Dainton
Newport

● OOH, YOU'RE SO WITTY! I 'SPESHIALLY LIKED THE JOKE JOKE ABOUT JENKINS, SO I'LL BE SENDING YOU TEN POUNDS – NO FIFTY POUNDS – RIGHT AWAY! (SMEDLEY – CANCEL THAT CHEQUE AND PASS MY BAZOOKA – CJ)

Yo, you furry dude, tell my white-haired Dad (Brian R) to give me a lot more pocket money. I need more money to get **Batman 2, Robocop, Operation Wolf** and lots more, since I am a new SU buyer and I need these cool-ly reviewed games.
Steven Reeves
Southwick

● CRIKEY STEVE, MY DAD DOESN'T GIVE ME ANY MONEY AT ALL! IN FACT, I HAVE TO GIVE HIM MONEY JUST FOR HIM TO LET ME LIVE AT HOME! AND JIM SMACKS ME ON THE HEAD IF I TAKE ANY GAMES FROM THE OFFICE (THOUGH I'M SURE HE LIKE ME REALLY). SO COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS, MR UNGRATEFUL!

I would like to say how megacoolbrillfab your mag is, so I will. Jim, Chris, Tony and El Presidente are brilliant (I'm sure you meant to mention me and Alison as well, you just forgot – WS). Also the reviews are the best. Even when the reviewer forgets to sign his name it gives me a mystery to solve (brilliant!)

Also I know that all you generous people at SU will give me a tenner to I can buy **E.H.I.S.** PS Who is Wayne Smedley?
Gavin Rae
Erskine

● I'D GIVE YOU ALL MY MONEY, GAVIN, 'COS YOU'RE SO GREAT, AND I KNOW YOU'RE ONLY JOKING WHEN YOU SAY "WHO IS WAYNE SMEDLEY?", BUT I HAVEN'T GOT ANY MONEY 'COS JIM BORROWED IT ALL OFF ME TO SPEND ON FAGS, SORRY

PASTEMAN PAT

GAMES REVIEW

Pat Plop is the best billboard poster in 'Groovetown' (!?!). After a hard day's work, Pat has gone back to inspect the fruits of his labours, to find that a rival posterer has rearranged all his posters. Oh no, how dreadful! Luckily, Pat's paste never dries (!?!?!) and so restoring the posters to their former glory is simply a case of taking a horsehair brush and sliding them back into place. And that's the game.

It's based, very loosely, around the concept of the funny little sliding puzzles you used to get free from McDonalds if ever you held a birthday party there (at very reasonable cost too). You had a closed rectangle, inside which were a number of square sliding blocks, each with a portion of a picture on them. One block would be missing, which would leave enough room for you to slide a row or a column one space. It was by this method of sliding that you eventually rearranged the blocks and built up the picture.

In **PP**, rather than remove a block, the game goes beyond the realms of possibility and brings in a wraparound feature. For the uneducated this means that if in the course of sliding, a block comes off the bottom of the screen, it comes on again at the top. This doesn't make the game any easier, just a little different.

The first of the 16 levels is easy to do. After all, it's only split into four pieces. By the end level, however, the poster has successfully managed to split itself into 64 pieces, with only half of those on screen at a time.

Controls are simple. You view Pat from behind, as he sits atop his ladder which, by some marvellous feat of new technology, allows him to scroll around the billboard in eight directions. This he has to do for two reasons. One so that he can get to all the parts of the board and the second is so that he can avoid all the missiles (boots, bricks, etc) being thrown at him by the selfsame billboard poster that messed them up in the first place. Scrolling the sections of the poster is via pressing the fire button to activate Pat's brush arm, and then pressing a direction to make him use it.

If you want to know how well you're doing, you can call up a picture of how the poster should look when it's finished, and then compare it to how much you've done. This is done by, believe it or not, going to the lavvy. No, not by wazzing on the wall, as I'm sure some of you out there originally thought, but by having a look at the plans whilst sitting on the big white telephone.









Graphics are OKish. The scroll works quite well, but apart from that, there's not a lot else. Well, what can you say about a puzzle game?

Basically, a bit dull. Perhaps puzzle games are meant to be dull, though I doubt it. Even if they are, why bother writing one for a computer?■

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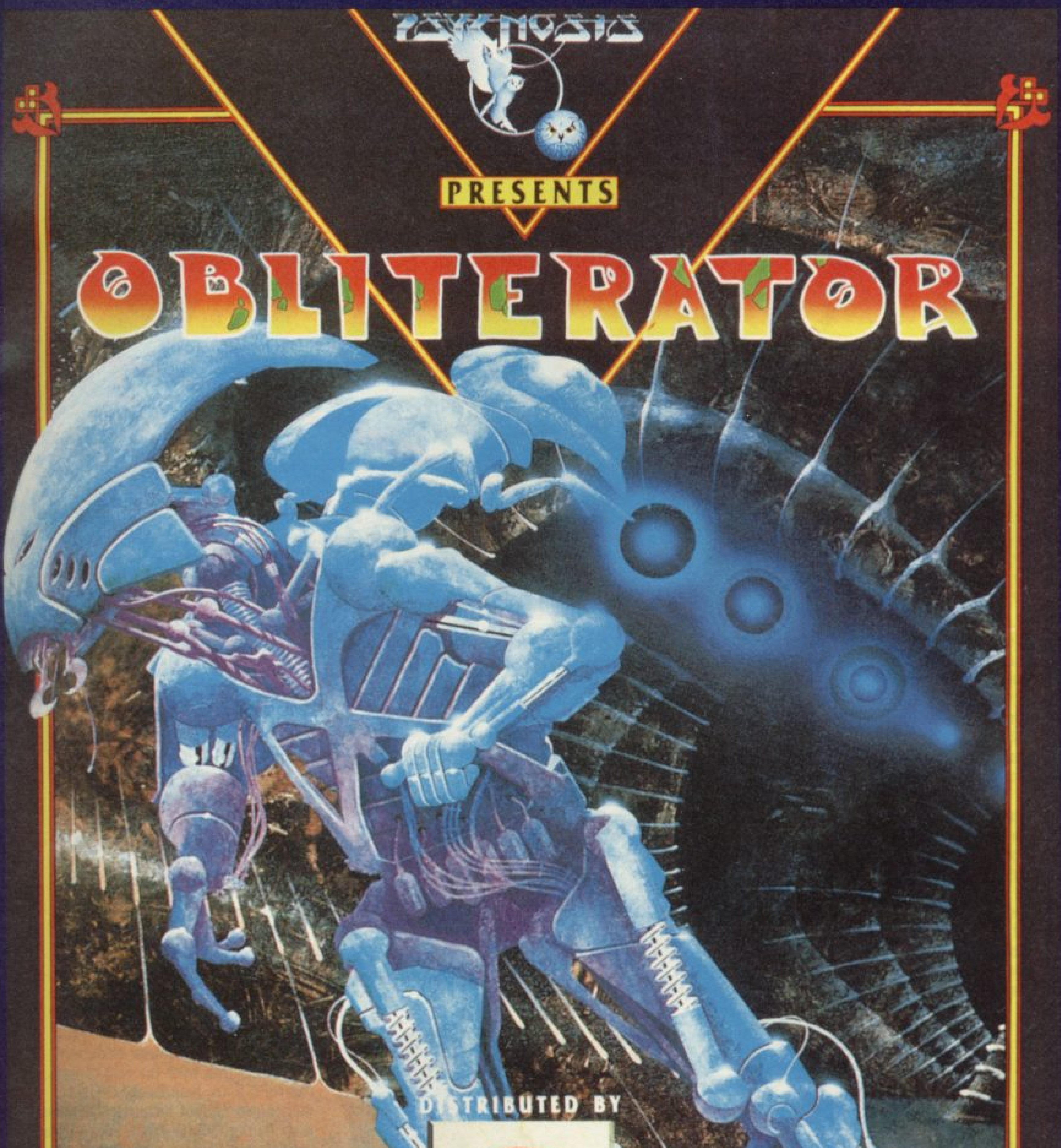
ARCADE REVIEW

PASTEMAN PAT *Label:* ***Silverbird*** *Author:* ***In-house*** *Price:* ***£1.99*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

Fairly good. By any other standards, it's pretty dull.

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY	OVERALL
71	55	73	51	65


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You can plug it into your telly up in the bedroom if you want a rest from the Spec and watch away into the early hours. And just in case you don't have anything left on the tapes at home you want to watch, we'll throw in a copy of the latest Schwarzenegger blockbuster, Red Heat for you. Even if you don't win the vid you may be lucky enough to win one of the FIVE other tapes up for grabs.



In the game (reviewed elsewhere this issue) you take the role of the movie's hero, Ivan Danko, on his mission to collect dangerous Russian drug dealer, Viktor Rosta. The mission goes horribly wrong and an American cop gets wasted. Rosta escapes and you've got to track him down.

Pretty tough. Luckily, the competition is so ruddy darned blooming easy matey that it'll make you say 'Now that's ruddy darned blooming easy matey, I'll have to enter it pronto or my friends at school will think I'm a bit of a stoopy and they'll pelt me with elastic bands in the playground' (Steady on now – JD). Well anyway all you have to do is this. See that pic of saucy Arnie with not so saucy Jim Belushi . . . have you



found it yet – yes, good.

Now, they're having a wee chatette aren't they? We think Jimbo could be saying "Didn't you kill my brother" to which Arnie could reply "might have". Funny eh? Oh you think you could do better: Well here's your chance. Tell us what Mr Muscles and his friend are saying and make us chuckle at the same time.

Should you be the lucky bleeder to snaffle this splendiferous prize, we'll rush it off to you and you'll never have to sit through another of little sis' Care Bears – the movie vids again, and that can't be bad eh?

Fill in the entry form and send it to 'Ooooh Arnie give me that vid' Sinclair User, 14 Holkham Road, Orton, Peterborough PE2 0UF.

My caption ....

....

Name ....

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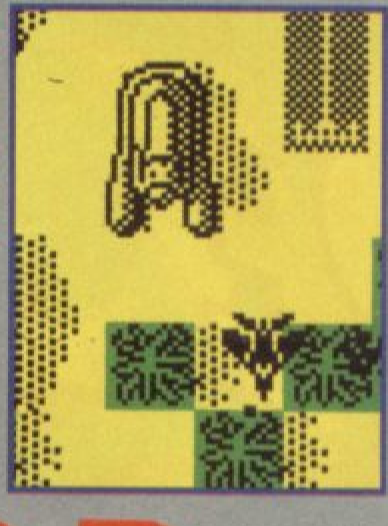
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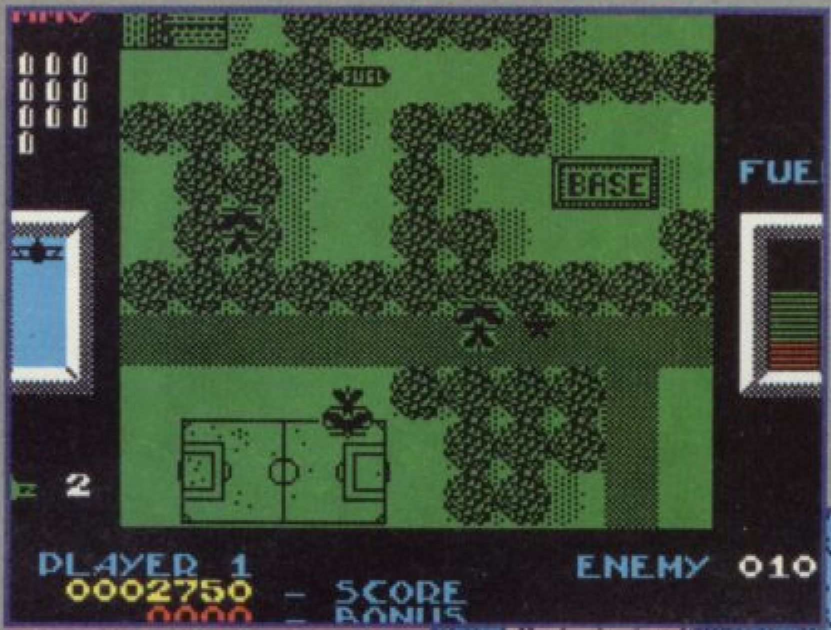
Closing date is June 30th 1989. EMAP and Ocean employees and little sisters who watch the Care Bears may not enter.

GAMES REVIEW!

ARCADE FLIGHT SIMULATOR







What ho, Algy! Spiffing day for an early morning recce! Get your flying togs on, spin your prop, chocks away and watch out for the Hun in the sun!

It's lovely flying weather, visibility up to 50,000 feet, the birds are twittering and your machine-guns are oiled. What better way to spend the morning than a hunt for the Red Baron and his flying circus. Watch out for those Fokkers!

Yes, Codemasters' **Arcade Flight Simulator** is the kind of game I've been waiting for for ages; it has a tiny tiny bit of simulatoriness about it, but the main aim is to blast everything that flies. The graphics are cool, the sound's OK and while it won't absorb your interest longer than it takes to explore all three levels, it's worth the £2.99.

A little like **Time Fighter**, the classic coin-op, **AFS** presents you with a top-down view of a scrolling playing area. Unlike **Time Fighter**, here your plane isn't limited to the centre of the screen; it can fly off the side and reappear on t'other, or fly north or south far enough to get off the playing area altogether, and reappear at the other end. On the first level, set in WW1, the playing area is quite large, and since your nicely-detailed plane and those of the ôpposition are pretty small, you get a great feeling of space.

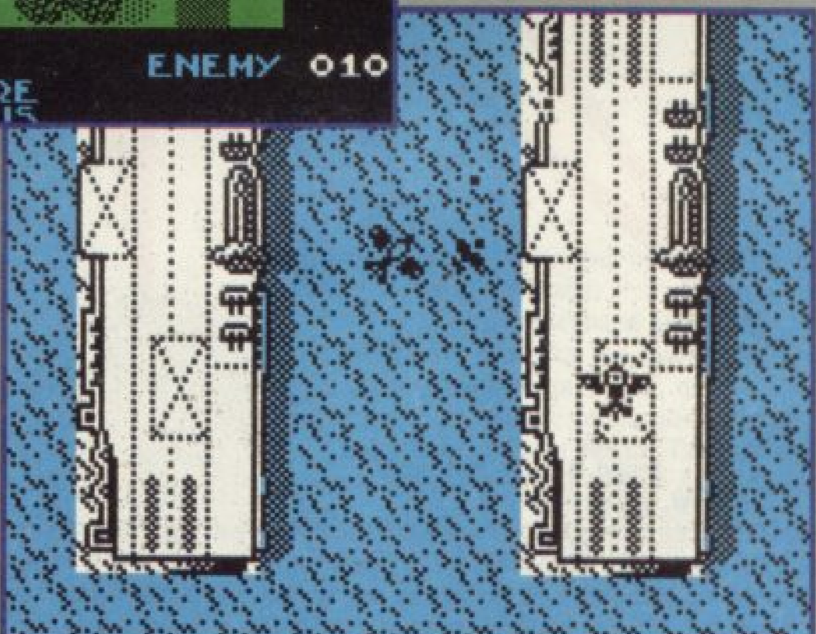
After taking off from your landing strip, your aim is to track down and destroy ten enemy fighters. These weave around and change height; you can judge your own height from the position of your shadow, and the altimeter on the left of the screen.

You have a limted amount of ammunition, and since you have to get quite close to the Hun to shoot them down, you will probably have to land to re-arm at some point. This is pretty tricky, as is refuelling, since it's easy to smash into the trees or other obstacles.

If you manage to shoot down the opposition, you have to land to pick up a bomb, find the enemy base (thoughtfully marked "BASE") and bomb it. Fail, and it's back to the start; succeed, and the next phase presents you with more enemy planes.

Strangely enough, that's it as far as the one-player game is concerned; but if you have two players, there are two further levels. These feature much smaller one-screen playing areas; level two features Second World War aircraft carriers, level three World War Three desert combat. The planes are faster, but the principle's the same, only it's one-to-one combat.

AFS could have been brilliant; if you had control over your plane's speed, or the ability to perform loops or other stunts, or if you could play all three levels in one-player mode. As it is, it's excellent fun for about an hour, then you'll be looking for new targets to shoot down■



ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

ARCADE FLIGHT SIMULATOR *Label:* ***Code Masters*** *Author:* ***Amazing Games*** *Price:* ***£2.99*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
76	78
69	47
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Bit of sim, bit of blasting – great fun on the cheap.

Reviewer:

OVERALL **65**

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SUNEWS



ACTIVISION IN ARMS RACE SHOCK!

By our 'Mutually Assured Destruction' Correspondent

In a shock terror arms race move this week, American-based software company Activision announced a weapons deal with a high-powered development house.

Vektor Grafix, run by John Lewis formerly of Cascade, will be working on a series of four games, the first of which is **Bomber – Tactical Air Combat.** In development for a staggering nine months, **Bomber –T.A.C.** is a multi-aircraft flight simulator featuring planes such as the Tornado, Phantom, F-111 and MiG-27.

By concentrating on multi-role aircraft rather than fighters or bombers, **Bomber – T.A.C.** gives you the chance to take part in dogfights, strategic bombing missions, and the Strategic Air Command bombing competition for the covetted Curtis LeMay Trophy (well, we covet it, anyway).

Bomber – T.A.C. will be launched on the Spectrum in June. We phone Mr Gorbachev to ask his reaction, but we were told that he was in the queue for cabbages and could he phone us back later.



Eeh, I'm so 'appy. They've let me write something for the mag. Months I've been hanging around EMAP Towers, looking forward to talking to Tony, making tea for Alison and adoring the lovely Jim – but they wouldn't let me do ANYTHING on the mag! "No, Wayne", they said, "it's much more important that you concentrate on really difficult things, like sticking stamps on letters and making the tea. That's where your talents lie."

But then The Bear had his little breakdown and of course I was the first choice to take over. I'm sure that the queue of disgruntled interviewees – including Kelvin the Wondrous Sloth from Hell – who blocked up the stairways for a fortnight were going for some other job, because after a lot of shouting and arguing they all left, and Jim took me to one side and said "Wayne, Wayney boy. Ol' Wayne, my mate. We've thought long and hard, and we've decided that you're just the man to write the Headlines. We won't insult you by offering you any money – we know you'll want to do it for THE MAG – and you can carry on making the tea and sticking stamps on letters. We don't want to take your dignity away from you. Now get the kettle on.

Well you can imagine how

WAR IN

we don't want to take your dignity away from you. Now get the kettle on."

Well you can imagine how thrilled I was by Jim's placing all his faith and trust in me, and I only hope I can live up to his expectations. He's sitting at the other end of the office waving at me now. In fact he's waving a pair of scissors.

So now I'm the official youth representative on the staff, I'll be answering all your hilarious letters, visiting all the computer shows and cleaning the desks. In fact I've already been waving the flag for SU *when I went to the European Computer Trade Show the other day. It was very swank, trade only, and all the big names were there. I tracked down Telecomsoft and offered to buy them out, 'cos I heard they'd been having a few problems, but they said they'd had a big offer from Microprose. What, I said, MORE than £45 and a collection of football cards?*

Anyhow, my own company, Waynesoft, made a good start, and I'm just about to sign my first licensing deal for the conversion rights to Points of View. *I'm hiring the same programmers who did* Eastenders, *and Jim's promised me a good review if I book eleven double-page colour ads at £6,000 each. He's so good to me!*

WAR IN BUDGET MARKET

By our 'Keep your head down' Correspondent

The latest combatants in the budget software war are Winner, a sister label to Alternative. Over-the-moon Winner boss Roger Hulley crowed, "Winner will follow in the footsteps of our other enormously successful budget labels, and with the future titles we have lined up there will be stopping us. Think of our first release as a warning shot across the bows of our rivals."

The first release from Winner is **W.A.R.**, Martech's oldie which didn't exactly storm to the top of any charts at all!

The first batch of games is due out in the Spring (sorry we couldn't give you a more specific date to go into hiding) and they'll be priced at a ground-breaking £2.99! We can't wait!



PRESTEL IN DRAMATIC MAG SHOCK

By our 'what type of modem have you got' Correspondent

Prestel subscribers were over the proverbial moon at the announcement that four new magazine features are now "on-line", as that sort of person likes to say.

NEWSDAY brings you news headlines and stories from around the world, and includes all the features micro kids love – stock exchange reports, rainfall statistics and British Rail timetables!

SPORTSEYE provides sports information and results, so you can capture all the excitement of the Test Match scoreboard without having to watch the match!

LOOK! is a "lifestyle" magazine covering travel, health, music, theatre, food and personal problems – like being stuck at home playing with your computer when everyone else is out having fun!

Finally GAMES CITY features state-of-the-art electronic entertainment such as one-armed bandits, quizzes, word games and the on-line adventure game **Shades.**

For more details of Prestel subscriptions and the hardware required, you can contact Dialcom UK on 0442 237370.

OXFAM GOES SOFT

By our 'all in a good cause' Correspondent

Ever wondered what you can do with all that old software you have lying around? You can't eat it, you can't build a hut out of it, but you can do some good with it by giving it all to Oxfam.

Throughout June and July, Oxfam is appealing for ANY type of software for ANY computer, and they want to hear from manufacturers, distributors and retailers as well as ordinary everyday people. They'll even take hardware, so dig out that ZX81 16K RAM pack NOW!

Most of the software and hardware will be resold through London shops during a special computer promotion starting on June 27th, but you can hand stuff in at any Oxfam shop throughout the country.

The money raised will go towards a number of projects for relieving poverty, hunger and disease in the Third World. If you want further details you should contact Richard English on 01-585 0220.

APOLOGY

Quite apart from the usual style of this page, we would like to make a serious point.

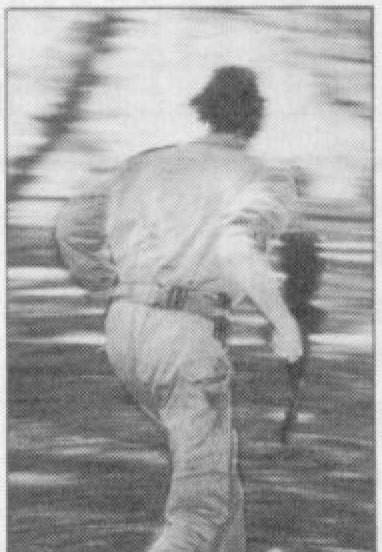
The May issue of Sinclair User heavily featured the forthcoming FA Cup. This issue was obviously put together before the tragedy at the Hillsborough ground. We'd like to apologise to anyone who found the issue offensive or upsetting in any way, and would like to explain that we were unable to alter the content of the May edition.

Sinclair User is to contribute to the Appeal Fund.

COMPETITION







TEN lucky prize winners will win a trip to the Zone at a date to be arranged once we've decided who's won.

A further **FIFTEEN** not quite so lucky but still pretty lucky compared to most people will receive glorious US Gold T-shirts and copies of **Vigilante.** Incredible.

All you have to do is answer the following quesiton and send it off to "Akka akka you're dead!" Compo, Sinclair User, 14 Holkham Road, Orton, Peterborough PE2 0UF. Competition closes June 30th.



US Gold, never a company to miss out on a new trend, have wised up to the incredible joys to be had from lurching around a forest shooting people. While this may sound like a bit of a primitive pastime, Combat Zone is, in fact, a growing leisure pursuit among city-types and high-flying executives.

And thanks to the release of **Vigilante,** a game with more than its fair share of unfriendliness involved, SU can proudly, gloriously even, offer you the chance to bag yourself a merchant banker.

Just in case you haven't a clue what goes on at these meetings, we'll explain. Twenty or thirty people get transported off into the hills somewhere in the north of London, they're kitted out with air rifles, protective goggles and camouflage and let loose on each other, shooting and firing for hours on end.

Well, okay, it's not quite as simple as that, but it's just as good. You get proper instruction in the ways of the Combat Zone. What to do. What not to do (getting shot is a bad thing. Shooting other people is a good thing). And generally the ground rules. It's considered a bad show for more than ten people to shoot someone at the same time.

COMBAT ZONE





(With perfectly harmless paint guns)

Question:
What does the tedious military abbreviation DMZ stand for?

Name...

Address...

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Answer...

....

I fully understand that should I win the competition I'm not allowed to shoot squirrels or deer or any protected species and no more than three orienteering imbeciles. Compo closes 30th June.



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Pos	Last	Title	Comment	Classic	Publisher	Price	Rating
1	(1)	ROBOCOP	Still hanging on at the top like a mad thing		OCEAN	£8.95	94%
2	(3)	EMLYN HUGHES IS	Another step up the chart – go on you footbally games	CLASSIC	AUDIOGENIC	£9.99	91%
3	(7)	WEC LE MANS	One of the best racing games ever, ever, ever!		IMAGINE	£8.95	91%
4	(4)	OPERATION WOLF	Brilliant, addictive, the ruddy bizzo	CLASSIC	OCEAN	£8.95	90%
5	(6)	DRAGON NINJA	Another kicky kicky – but a good one		OCEAN	£8.95	78%
6	(9)	IN CROWD	Good value compilation from Ocean		OCEAN	£14.95	80%
7	(5)	DOUBLE DRAGON	Disappointing karate caper	CLASSIC	MELBOURNE HOUSE	£9.99	51%
8	(8)	WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH	Blend of every genre ever		MELBOURNE HOUSE	£9.99	79%
9	NEW!	PACLAND	A must for Pac-loons		GRAND SLAM	£8.95	70%
10	(11)	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	An improvement on legendary games – plays brilliantly		ADDICTIVE	£9.99	94%
11	NEW!	FUN SCHOOL 2	Zany educational romp		DATABASE/MANDARIN	£5.95	UR
12	NEW!	GARY LINEKER'S HOT SHOTS	Previewed in April ish		GREMLIN GRAPHICS	£7.99	UR
13	(2)	AFTERBURNER	Ooer you're not so mad about this one anymore		ACTIVISION	£9.99	90%
14	(14)	BATMAN	First-class Batman romp scenario		OCEAN	£8.95	90%
15	(10)	THUNDERBLADE	Fab conversion of a good coin-op		US GOLD	£8.99	87%
16	(15)	FOUR SOCCER SIMS	Not brilliant footy game drops one place		CODE MASTERS	£8.99	42%
17	(20)	BARBARIAN 2	Enjoyable beat-'em-up making a comeback		PALACE	£9.95	69%
18	(18)	HEROES OF THE LANCE	No move for this cross of RPGs and arcade-adventure		US GOLD	£9.99	70%
19	NEW!	INTERNATIONAL RUGBY	Yet another lovely scrumbo game		ARTIC	£7.95	UR
20	(13)	GIANTS	US Gold's great value compilation		US GOLD	£12.99	78%



CHARTS COMMENT → FULL PRICE

SIMULATION

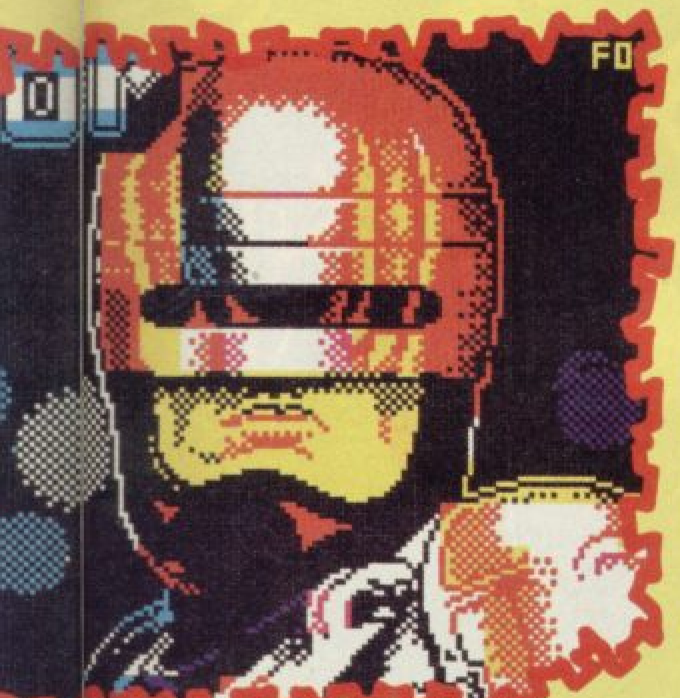
1	EMLYN HUGHES IS	AUDIOGENIC
2	WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH	MELBOURNE HOUSE
3	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE
4	GARY LINEKER'S HOTSHOTS	GREMLIN GRAPHICS
5	FOUR SOCCER SIMS	CODEMASTERS

ARCADE

1	ROBOCOP	OCEAN
2	WEC LE MANS	IMAGINE
3	OPERATION WOLF	OCEAN
4	DRAGON NINJA	OCEAN
5	DOUBLE DRAGON	MELBOURNE HOUSE



SU CHARTS

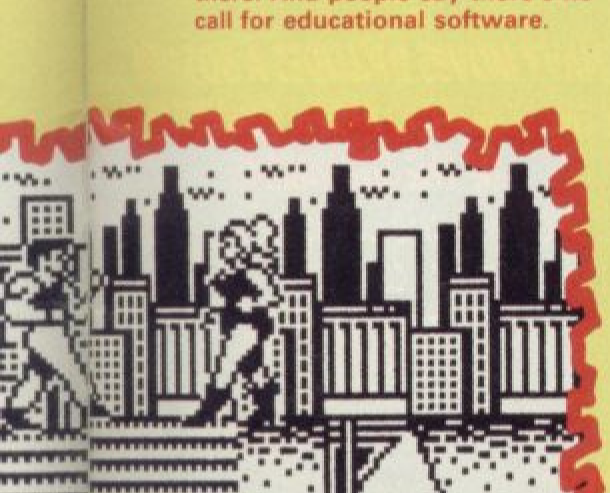


CHARTS COMMENT → BUDGET



Dizzy **holds fast as the supreme king of the budget world. The gothic spectacle** Werewolf of London **gets this month's accolade of Highest Budget New Entry, with a sterling support in the capable hands of** Super Cycle. SAS Combat Sim **isn't doing too badly, surprisingly. Shows how many people take notice of reviews.**

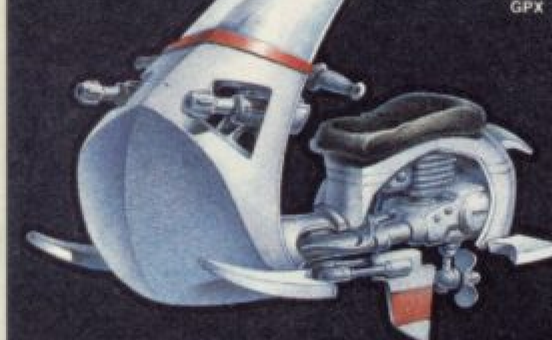
You prove yet again that football games are the donkey's left hind leg as Afterburner plummets forever downward to be replaced by . . . Emlyn Hughes International Soccer. Robocop stays there, as usual. Looks like this one's gonna be harder to beat than the guy in the movie. Fun School 2 slips in there. And people say there's no call for educational software.



BUDGET 10

1	(1)	**TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY** Unsatisfying but as we said, popular sequel	CODEMASTERS	£2.99	60%
2	(9)	**SAS COMBAT SIM** Not very simulatory, or very SASish either	CODE MASTERS	£2.99	58%
3	(4)	**STREET GANG FOOTBALL** Lovely graphics but no real game	PLAYERS	£1.99	54%
4	(6)	**THE DOUBLE** My God, football games are a licence to print money	ALTERNATIVE	£2.99	60%
5	(3)	**KNIGHTMARE** Enjoyable graphical adventure based on SFX TV series	MASTERTRONIC	£1.99	89%
6	(5)	**JOE BLADE 2** On the way down this month	PLAYERS	£2.99	55%
7	NEW!	**WEREWOLF OF LONDON** Dreadful spook catastrophe – for goths only	MASTERTRONIC	£1.99	48%
8	NEW!	**SUPER CYCLE** Rerelease classy 3D game	KIXX	£2.99	72%
9	(2)	**BACK TO SCHOOL** Follow up to Skooldaze – less funny	ALTERNATIVE	£2.99	70%
10	(7)	**BIG FOOT** Big game, grotty graphics	CODE MASTERS	£2.99	57%





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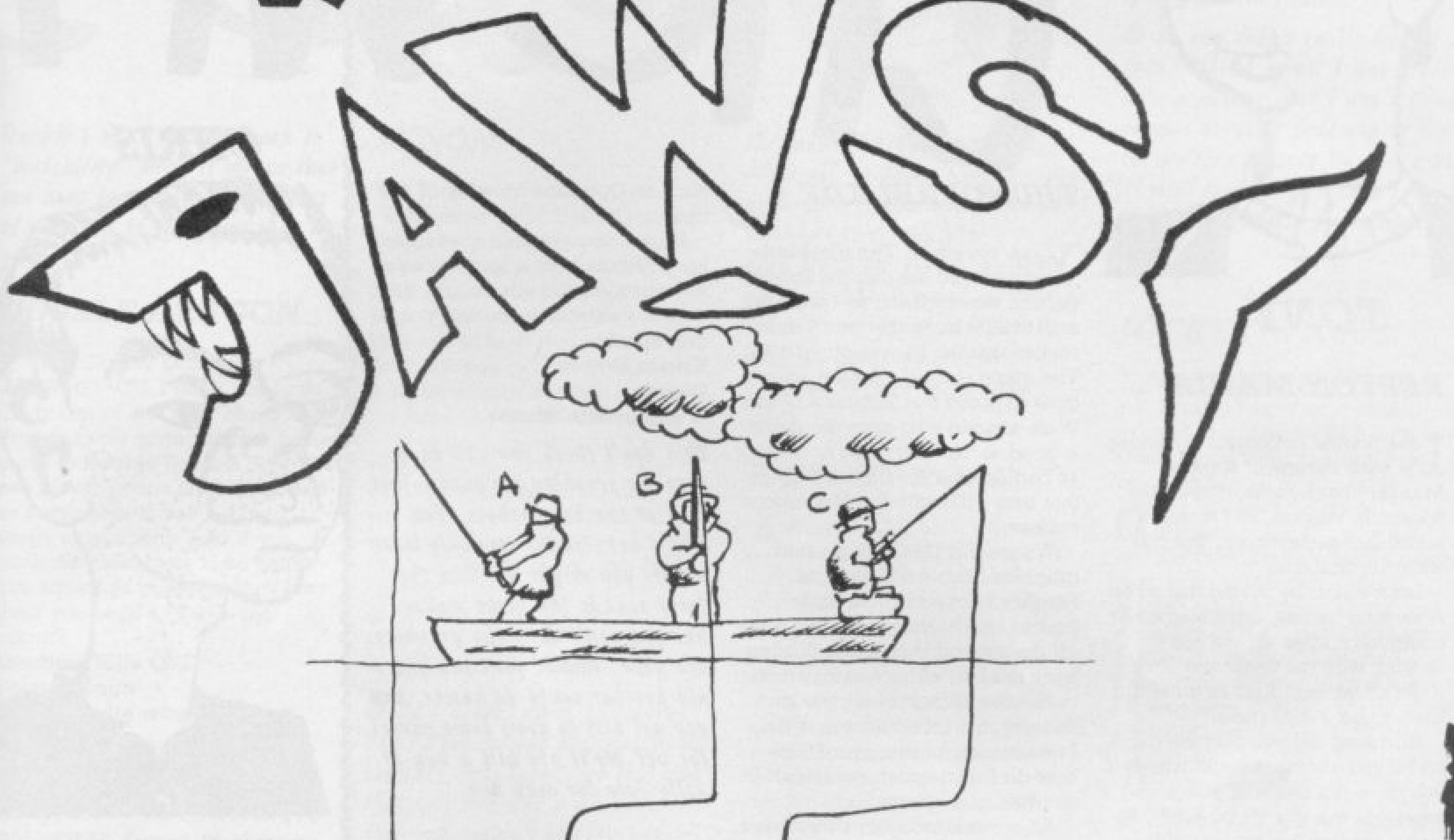
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COMPETITION

JAWS



It's been a long time in the making (the original movie appeared over a decade ago), but with amazing competitions like this, the wait may well have been worth it. This is Jaws, the game of the film of the big gnashy fish, and it's about to be released by Screen 7 Software. For more info on the game splash along to this month's *Previews* page.

But it's not previews we're talking about here. No sir. It's swimming trunks and snorkels. Just right for those long, lazy beach days which come between the showers in this wonderful British Summer of ours.

TEN lucky people are going to get to splash around in a pair of Arena swimming trunks, and make bubbly noises through a gorgeous underwater-type mask'n'snorkel rig. If you're a girlie (and heaven knows, someone must be) you can get a dead sophis swimsuit instead of the trunks.

All you have to do is tell us, in your expert opinion as a deep-sea fisherma, which of the hearty seadogs on the Sharkcatcher is going to land something that might bite his leg off. Easy? Peasy.

Send your entry to: I could fill those trunks contest, Sinclair User, 14 Holkham Road, Orton, Peterborough PE2 0UF. Compo closes June 30th.

NAME..ADDRESS ....

..POSTCODE..

I think that fisherman .... is going to catch something nasty.
If I win I'd look best in trunks/swimsuit (delete as appropriate).
I confirm that I realise it is foolish to breathe underwater and I will not bit any unwary swimmers while wearing the abovementioned trunks/swimsuit. Closing date 30th June 1989

the writ



TONY

REPTON MANIA

I felt unable to contain my anger at your review of **Repton Mania.** I have never played the Spectrum version, so I'm not in actual fact reviewing it, but you were supposed to.

Let me start by saying that when reviewing games, don't slag other computers, after all, we are dealing with the Spectrum here. Right or wrong? And so what if it used to be a BBC game?

How long did you play the game for? If you ask me, I doubt whether you gave it a chance! You probably thought "Huh! A BBC game conversion, let's get this over and done with!"

I doubt whether Superior Software will be very happy with this unjust review. It used to be that reviews were clearly a reviewer's own opinion, but you've gone too far into the realms of bias. A very unprofessional review.

KD Ellis
Chelmsford
● **SU goodie winner.**

● Silly, silly Mr Ellis, First you blow your whole argument by admitting that you haven't played the Spectrum version yourself (I have, God help me). Then you miss the point about the conversion; if a game is converted from the ZX81, you'd be happy to see black-and-white graphics and no sound, would you? EVERY game ought to take full advantage of the computer's capabilities. How long did I play the game for? Much too long, but I love my work. And am I biased? Yes! I'm biased against poor games, in favour of good ones! I don't get paid more for writing a critical review, you know. I call 'em as I see 'em. So yah boo sucks.

THUNDERBLADE

Your review of **Thunderblade** convinced me that the Speccy version was brilliant, so I went out and bought it. At the time I didn't realise that the 87 was out of 1000. The game is crud – which again goes to prove that Tony is a Dillon. Well, anyone who says the game is good, is. Honestly, you're getting as bad as Your Sinclair (Surely not that bad – JD) with the Megagame industry.

Where did US Gold get the graphics from – the back of Frosties packets? It certainly looked like it. No sooner had I got off the ground than I was floating back to earth with a one way ticket to Heaven. Worst of all, the shot that got me, I thought was mine. I've just one question for Dillon, how do I distinguish my missiles or white blobs from his?

All considered, 50% would have been more appropriate for this crap.

Mark Rogerson
Wigan
● **SU goodie winner.**

● We have it on good authority that US Gold got the graphics, not from the back of Frosties packets, but from old Sergeant Rock comics. No, just kidding, we all thought it was as close to the coin-op as you could get on the (t)rusty Spectrum. It is an effort telling one white blob from another, but isn't that a feature of the coin-op? Anyway, don't you dare say we're getting as bad as Y S*******, even in jest.***

WEC LE MANS

Tony, are you deranged or in need of psychiatric attention? Obviously. Imagine giving the graphics on **WEC Le Mans** 94%. They're almost as bad as **Afterburner's** graphics, and that's saying something. My two-year-old brother could design better scribbles than that! The graphics aren't even worth half the marks you gave them. You must be BLIND, and more needed in mags such as Opticians Monthly or My Speccy (Ha!)

I hope you are able to read this letter. Apart from a few mishaps and mistakes (cough, cough), your mag is unbeatably crucial. Yours graphically

Kristin Dowey
Corby
● **SU goodie winner.**

● I don't think you can deny that the graphics are good – just look at the screenshots. You might not like the way they move about, you might not like the farty sounds the game makes, but you can't deny the graphics are good. And if your two-year-old brother could do better, can you get him to draw some covers for us? We'll pay him a bag of Jelly Tots for each one.

LASER SQUAD

I have been reading SU for quite a while now, and I think it's brill, apart from one thing, a t**d called Tony Dillon. (Tony is not a t**d. He's a t**********d. – JD). When he reviewed **Laser Squad,** he gave it 89%. Yet in another mag he gave it 97%. WOW! Yes, it's true, 3% away from 100%, 8% difference. Does this Dildoid always change his mind? So come on Dilly, you can do better than that, open your eyes and get on with your life. Whoops, sorry about that, you can't do better 'cos you're 100% PATHETIC!

PS Do me a favour Dildoid, shoot yourself, you're so daft you probably will.

PPS **Laser Squad** was crap anyway.

Asad Habib
Sheffield
● **SU goodie winner.**

● So that's what it comes down to, is it – you thought Laser Squad was crap? Well why didn't you just say so? Incidentally, as Thomas Edison said, "Consistency is the bugbear of small minds". Mind you, look what happened to him.

CHRIS



CAPTAIN BLOOD

Are you people at SU sure of Chris Jenkins' mental health (Yes – we're sure it's extremely dubious – JD). I'm not either. I think you should have him checked up, because acting on his **Captain Blood** review I think he is stark raving bonkers. The game is MEGA BRILLIANT AND COOL! It is almost as cool as me (Surely not that cool – CJ). Giving this game a mere 69% is catastrophic. The graphics are some of the best I've ever seen, and, even though it's a little weird, it should have got 101% at least, not to mention a triple Classic.

The music is also pretty cool, and the atmosphere is great. The game has great lastability as well. Try to do better next time Chris. I'm surprised you have the cheek to share my name. PS I think that Mark Lauden's idea of having three reviewers for each game is very good. It would add more variety.

Chris Wigley
Newnham
● **SU goodie winner.**

● Well Mr Piggly Wiggly, I was here first so I guess that I have a better claim to the name than you do. I can see how you might have liked CB more than me, but

te stuff

frankly I don't reckon much to "lastability" when it means that you have to devote eleven years of your life to finishing the game.

DOUBLE DRAGON

Dear Chrissy Babes (Er . . . Wot? – CJ), I think you have the brains of an Outer Mongolian Wombat only giving such a brill game as **Double Dragon** 51%! The two player option is cool, as well as being able to use a varied range of weapons. And if you think the characters have heads like squashed potatoes, then why don't you have a look in the mirror?
Jonathan Hills OBE,
Peterborough
● **SU goodie winner.**

● Look in a mirror? Whatever can the child mean? Clump, clump, clump . . . creeeak (Ye Olde EMAP Towers Washroom Door) – click . . . glare . . . AYEEEEGH!



JIM

XENON

Why on earth was **Xenon** given 90%? It must be the most unoriginal game of all time! The first level is so simple that I got to the end of it first go, only to be confronted by an almost indestructible end-of-level alien. Although you can choose between a space ship or a ground vehicle, the latter is slow and sluggish.

The graphics are poor and in monochrome, in fact, the only good point is the 128K sound, which hardly justifies the £7.95 price. Avoid this game at all costs, and don't be fooled by the SU Classic
G Gillam
Ware
● **SU goodie winner.**

● Do I detect some bitterness here? Perhaps you were fooled by the easy first level into thinking that this one was a walkover – then you couldn't kill the end-of-level beastie. Hah! Well put a bit more effort into it, laddie, and your perseverance will be rewarded. As for the graphics, they're as stylish as Jonathan Ross's underpants, and I won't have a word said against them.

LED STORM

Jim Douglas should be shot! The rating he gave to **LED Storm** was far too low; it should have got at least 98% and a Classic, not a puny 63%. The graphics are almost identical to the arcade, and the game is wickedly addictive. Also, why no mention of the 128K version? No multiload, and the title screens and high score chart music is the best 128 sound I've ever heard. The sound effects are pretty mega too. The scrolling has to be the best ever seen on the Spectrum and the game plays like a dream. PS Why don't you mention the 128K version on so many games, **Tiger Road** for instance?
James Greenhalgh
Huntingdon
● **SU goodie winner.**

● Well it's like this. Sometimes we load things up in 48K mode, review them, and just go with the marks we get from that. After all, it doesn't make much difference to the overall mark; it wouldn't be fair to give a game a good mark for sound, if 48K owners couldn't get it. Is that an adequate explanation? No? Oh well, we just couldn't be bothered to load it in 128K mode.

VICTORY ROAD

Are you MAD or is it just my imagination? How could you possibly give **Victory Road** only 74%? It's so brill. Playability is fab – it's the same all the way through, and the graphics are the best I've ever seen in my life (exactly the same as in good old **Ikari Warriors,** and I hate that game so much the programmers should have been squashed ages ago), and the sound is so fabdabadoozy I needn't even mention it, but I will. You should have given this game at least, oooh, 2%. No, you're not mistaken dummy. Now it's time to get down to business. This game is totally S*"/@ £&T. DO NOT BUY IT, especially if you've got **Ikari Warriors,** even though it was in my opinion a complete cock-up. You will spend your money on something much more worth while like **R-Type,** won't you? As for you, you stupid reviewer, BE CAREFUL or I'll come around and sort you out!
Keith Salisbury
Surbiton
● **SU goodie winner.**

● So you didn't really like it then? Well I admit I was a bit over-generous, but I don't think anyone actually deserves to die for writing Victory Road – a bit of mild torture, but I don't think the death penalty is indicated.

JOCKEY WILSON

Yeek! Horror! Yikes! "Jimbo" Dudley has done it again. When I got March's SU I quickly read the contents to see if it had any simulations. Ahhh! I see **Jockey Wilson's Darts Challenge.** I read through it quickly and saw a classic mistake. You wrote: "The only thing it doesn't do is suggest a shot you should do". Well, darts fans, just press T when you're playing. Please take more care next time or I'll shove my Plus 2 up your nose!
David Vasquez
Kingston
● **SU goodie winner.**

● Hola! Jeem caught making a mistake! Pigs fly! The moon turns blue! Philip Schofield does something intelligent! The world comes to an end! OK OK, I made a tiny little mistake. Well spotted. Grumphh.

ALL CHANGE ON THE WRITE STUFF!

All right all right! You think we talk a lot of nonsense, do you? You think we can't tell an SU Classic from a 15% clunker? Well this is your chance to set the record straight.

Every month we'll devote the Write Stuff section to your thoughts and opinions on games. Is Jim mad? Tell us so! Is Tony the coolest thing since ventilated boxer shorts? Let us know! Is Chris the best software reviewer in the galaxy (hem-hem)?

Instead of insulting you by offering you money, if you get your contribution to the Write Stuff published you'll get an EXCITING EXCLUSIVE SU BADGE, so the whole world will know that your words have been immortalised in SU. Starting next issue the best letter will also get a £20 software bundle (of our choice, before you ask).

So if you have any opinions on recent games we've reviewed (or even ones we haven't), write your review and send it to us together with the completed form below.

Keep your wodge under 150 words, try to avoid blasphemy, obscenity and libel and send the lot to Write Stuff, Sinclair User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU

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ZAPCHAT

'Dangerously sexy.' That's how one so-called 'expert' (our mate Trevor who says 'Salt and Vinegar?' down at the chippy) described the totally mega contents that make up this month's 'visual experience' that is *Zapchat*. GASP at the earth-shaking tips for *Renegade 3*, WOOP over the wondrous bits on *H.A.T.E.* from Vortex and shout 'LORDY LORDI' when casting your peepers over the so-called 'rest'. Then sit back in your very best duffle coat, sip a cup of cha to clean the old pipes out and contemplate the fate of all those poor souls who didn't purchase this issue of SU from the stout yeoman at the newsagent . . . People who'll almost certainly get the 'hump' when they realise what they've missed while you can cruise about feeling like a true groove-machine with enough worldly knowledge to dine out on for the next hundred years. Blinking flip eh? If you 'fancy yourself' as a bit of a tipster/mapster, then we're always willing to read your stuff. Send the gunk in to 'I may be a swamp donkey but I still need the cash', Sinclair User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. It's where it's at!

H.A.T.E. . . . Vortex

Your pilot on today's flight: Jon 'Watch out for that pillar!' Riglar

It's in 3D! It's got a strange name! It's got lotsa swarming alien types that can kill! It's got bits to collect and pull behind! It's big! It's *H.A.T.E.* from Vortex. And rather a splendid shoot 'em up it is too. There are, we are reliably informed, about twenty squillion levels to the game and so if you're a total geek and can't get off level one or two, here's what to do.

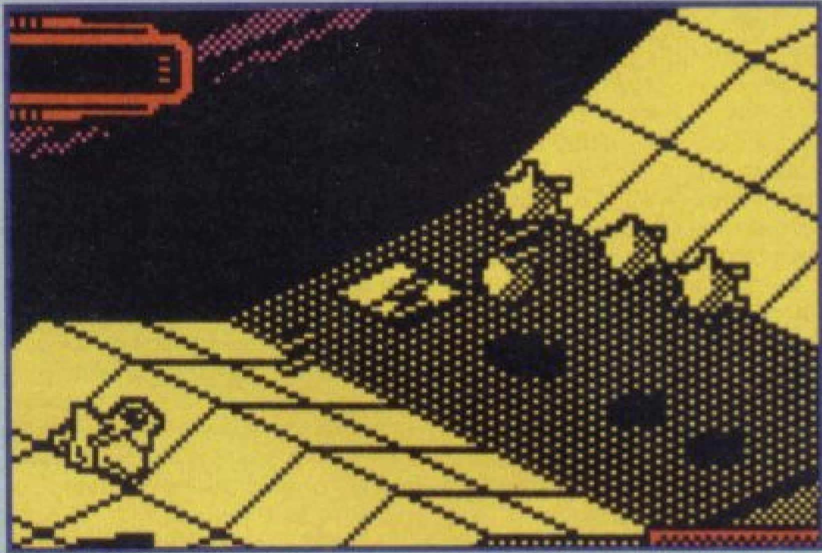
In order to pass from one level into another, you (bleel) need to collect at least one plasma cell (barf) and drag it along behind you. If you don't manage to keep hold of it and attempt to pass on to the next level, you'll be chopped by the dreaded cheesewire, or at least something like that.

At the start of level one, you'll take off on automatic pilot and virtually straight away, about four or five missiles will appear and lob themselves in your direction. The best way to deal with these critters (the type that don't shoot back) is to swerve from side to side and keep firing. Surviving these, you'll next be attacked by a set of things looking suspiciously like a spinning top. Keep down low and fire all the time. Keep over to the right hand side of the area and lob bullets like billyo towards the hatch where the alien types are being launched from. Directly behind that, there is the first plasma cell.



Shoot at the plasma cell to get rid of the outer coating and then fly into the 'stick' that remains to collect it. You'll now have collected the first cell which should be happily trudging along behind you. You need to be careful not to run into aliens in order to preserve this cell.

Moving on, you'll find another set of plasma cells to the left followed by another alien hatchway. The alien types found flying around in this area look remarkably (remarkably! copyright D Coleman Ltd) like the ones found zooming around in *Alien Highway*. Try to knock out as many as possible before getting too close. If there are any left once you reach the hatchway, dive down



low and swerve to avoid them. You may find yourself losing a plasma cell though. The next plasma cell is on a hill straight ahead and you'll need to alter the height of your spacecraft to clobber it.

Level one should present no more major problems and soon you'll be flying over the end of level barrier and landing on automatic pilot reading to be transported into the ground attack vehicle. (Which looks remarkably like a Robin Reliant.)

Now that you're in control of the tank, remember that pulling the joystick will control the speed of the craft and so some pretty hairy aliens can be avoided by simply zooming around them or applying the brakes. Also remember that you can 'lob' heavy duty shells by putting the tank into full speed and pressing the fire button while accelerating.

Grab as many plasma cells as you can while on the move and watch out for the stinking rotten awfully horrible (Copyright T Dillon Reviews) alien types that fire back at you towards the end of the level. When you encounter these, make sure that the tank does not swerve too much otherwise the aliens can take out the plasma cells you are towing.

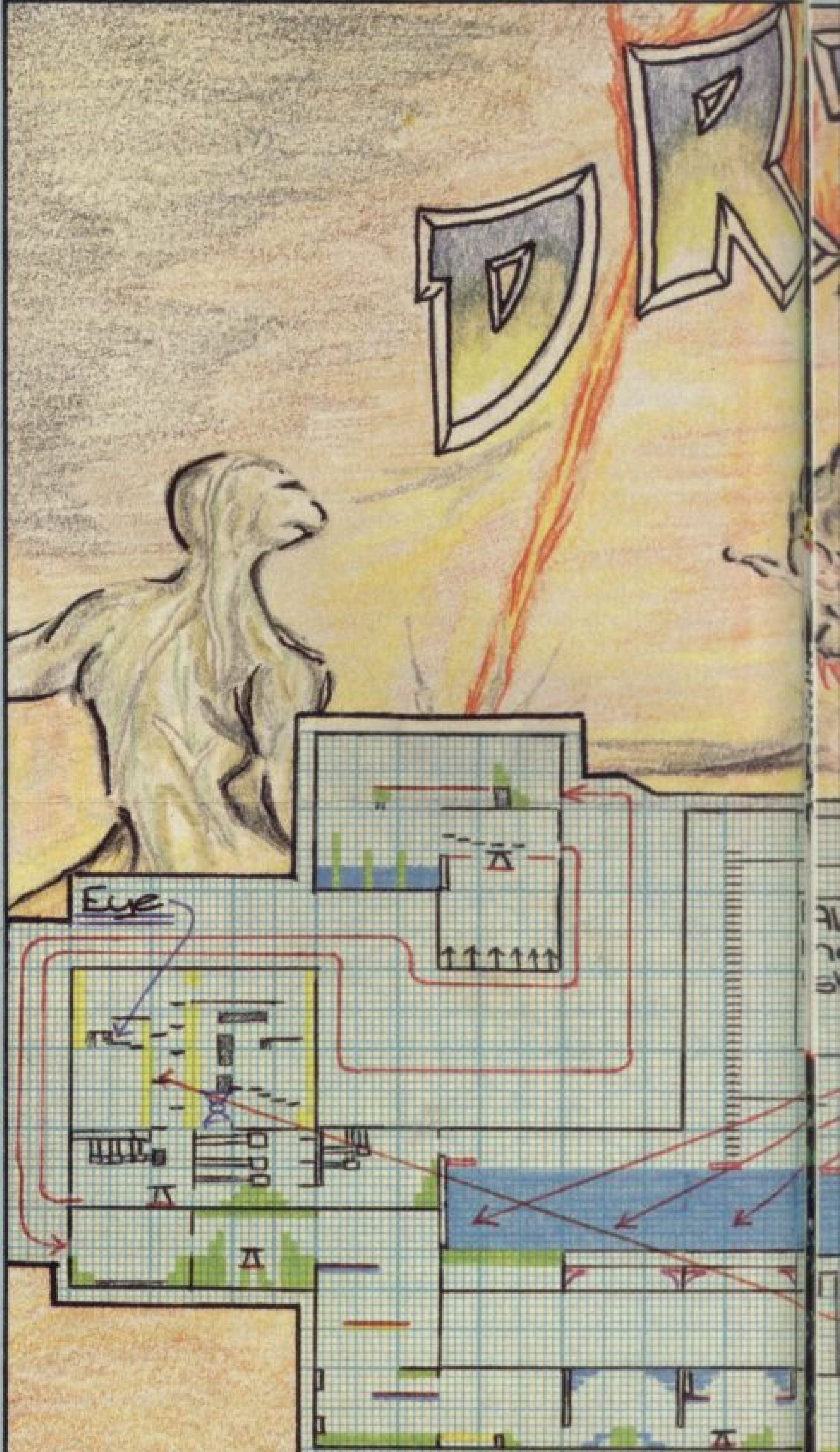
Level three is basically a re-hash of level one with you (blee) controlling the aircraft again. This level includes tunnels and passages which require some nifty flying to get through especially if you are towing some plasma cells. If you come up against what seems to be a blocked passage, simply fire at the blocks in the way and keep doing so until they disappear.



ZAPCHAT

RUDDY QUICK TIPS SECTION
Ruddy Quick Tip Inspector: *Reginald Pughbottock*

Sad isn't it? No I'm not talking about the state of the ozone layer, I'm talking about the state of your maps. They're terrible and it's just not 'on' frankly. (Probably 'cause he'd die of suffocation with all that paper on top of 'im.) So, listen up. If you want a chance to win the legendary 50 smackers as dispatched by our very 'accounts' depo then you're just gonna have to put more effort in. Remember to use lovely bright felt tips, we don't want any



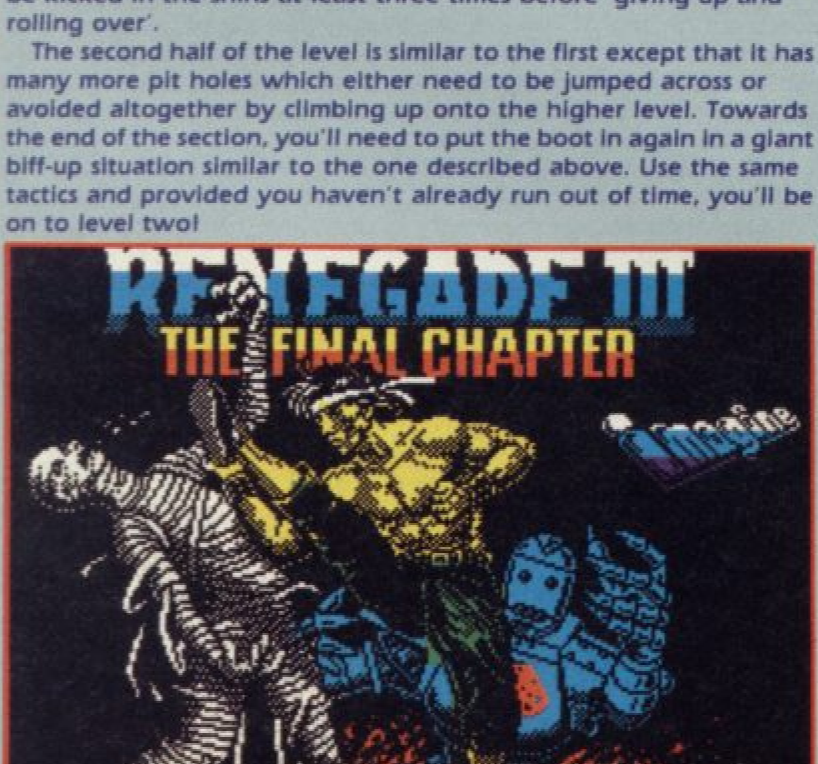
RENEGADE 3 . . .
Imagine *Wuffle creature from Mars: Jon 'wuffle wuffle' Riglar*

Let's go back in time! (Cue spooky music. Oohohohoho!) Back to a time when Tony Dillon wore national health specs and bread was some ridiculous price like 2d. Go back a bit further and you might find yourself in *Renegade 3.* Poor old Rene (for it is he!) is surrounded by creatures that look like Dino from the Flintstones and other little furry ones that look uncannily like the Dildoid himself.

Renegade 3 has two main levels of play. You need only climb the holes in the rocks to gain access to the level above if things get a bit hairy below or when you need to avoid jumping a big gap. And avoiding it is the best thing to do, because no matter how hard you tempt Rene, it is impossible to jump across some. When on the lower level don't worry about attacking Dildoids etc as they will only slow you down, instead run away to preserve your energy. The best route through level one is marked on the SU custom built map but basically the level appears to be split into two halves.

During the first half, you'll need to avoid the creatures and jump around to avoid the little critters dropped from the sky and also watch out for the cave man who lobs rocks at you from the top level. At the end of this half, the screen will clear of creatures and then two groups of three will attack you, one group coming from the right hand side of the screen and the other running in from the left. This is the main combat part of the level and you can't run away now. Try to pick on one creature at a time and make sure that your man keeps on the move otherwise he'll be cornered. It doesn't matter which types of creature you attack first although it makes some sort of sense to attack the one which is nearest otherwise he'll put the boot into you. If things get too hairy then try to move up and down the screen which can sometimes make the creatures back off a bit. Each creature, whether it be a Dildoid type or not, needs to be kicked in the shins at least three times before 'giving up and rolling over'.

The second half of the level is similar to the first except that it has many more pit holes which either need to be jumped across or avoided altogether by climbing up onto the higher level. Towards the end of the section, you'll need to put the boot in again in a giant biff-up situation similar to the one described above. Use the same tactics and provided you haven't already run out of time, you'll be on to level two!





more of these cruddy pencil efforts. Take this chap Lee Arnold. He's sent in a map for *Draconus* which is so well dudey that we're gonna print it and send him the money. As I've always said, make an effort now and in a few years' time you'll . . . (Snip! Jon Riglar has been sent to the nearest retirement home for decrepit form teachers – Ed) In the meantime, here are Lee Arnold's tips for Draconus . . .

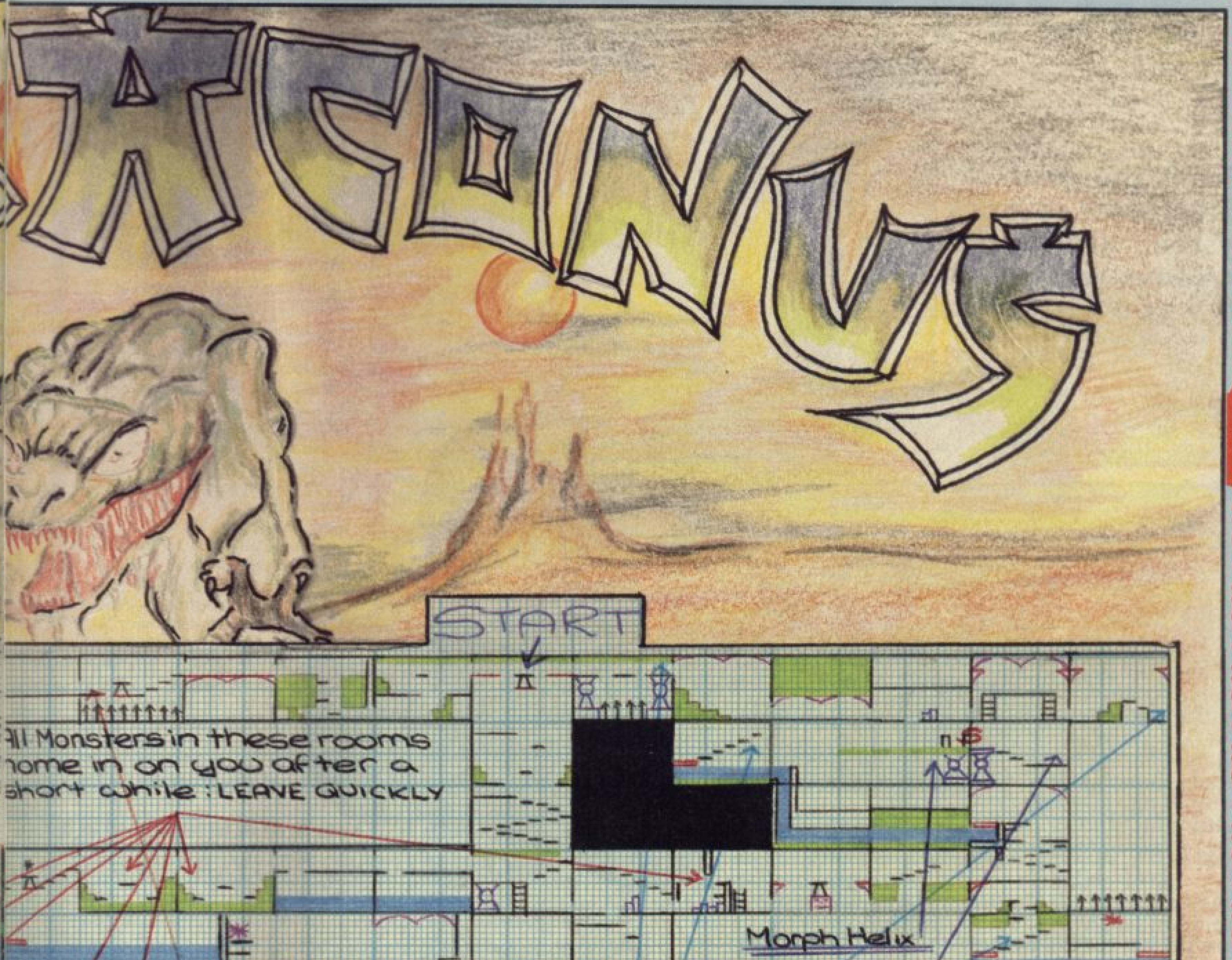
1 When standing on the morph slab (after collecting the morph helix) you have to stand in a precise place to transform into a 'Draconewt'. This is usually on the left of the slab.

2 To collect spells you will need to find the Dragon's Eye. Once you have this Eye a hole in the room containing the morph helix will appear. Through the hole is a room containing the Necromancer's staff. With this staff you can collect spells (stars).

3 In some rooms the monsters will home in on you after a short while. Leave these as quickly as possible.

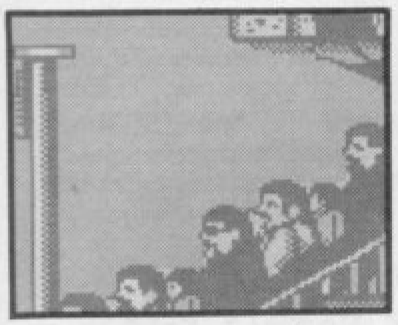
4 Do not shoot the groups of Diamond shaped monsters – they will start to chase you if you do.

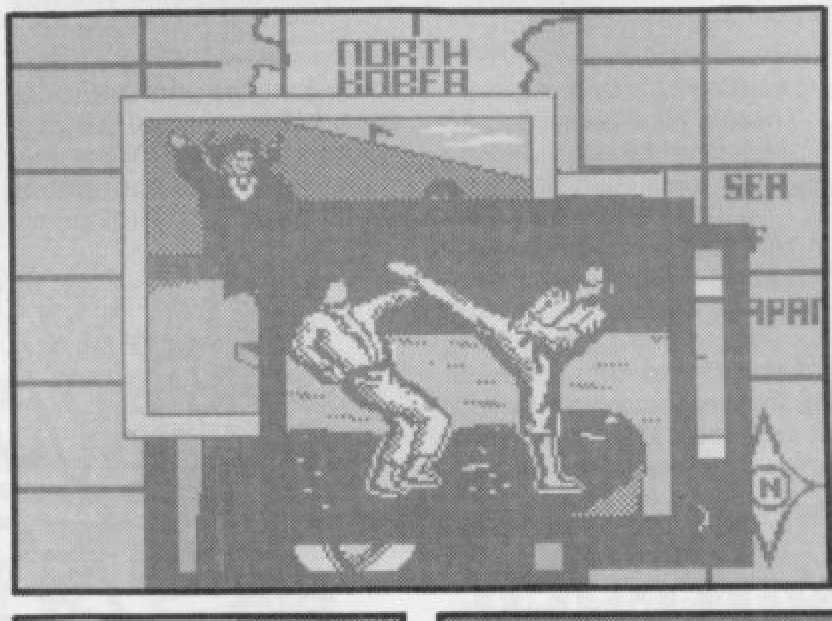
5 Only enter water when you are a 'Draconewt' or you'll drown.



THE GAMES SUMMER EDITION

GAMES REVIEW!

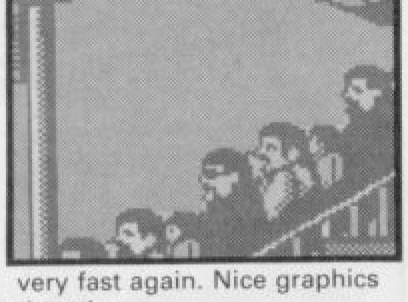




Before I sink into the perilous task of reviewing this, there is just one question we need to ask ourselves. Do we need another in the games series? Let's face it, no. Evidently this hasn't occurred to Epyx, who assail the market yet again with the seventh in the Games series, **The Games – Summer Edition.**

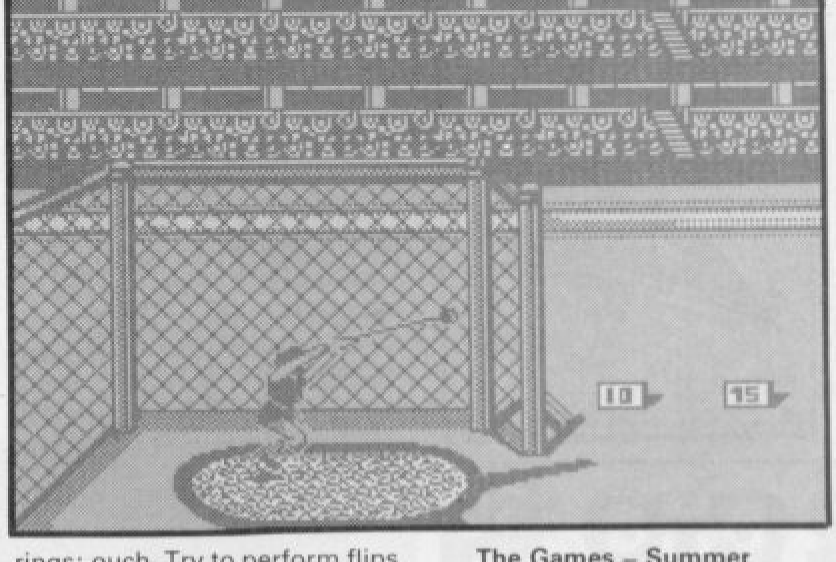
To be fair, though not all the events are spanking brand new and original, they are all covered in a new way, or are just, in theory, executed a whole lot better.

In this little seven event bundle you get, and in no particular order or significance of rank: Diving; viewed as a side on (when isn't it?) you are given a lot more moves to choose from this time around. You can dive forward, you can drive backwards, you can change the springiness of the diving board. Hammer throwing; I thought Epyx had opted out of the joystick-busting events. Wrong. Waggle the joystick very fast, press fire, and then waggle the joystick



very fast again. Nice graphics though.

Velodrome Cycling; boring. Watch two guys nailed to bicycles made from plates racing round and round on the inside of a bowl. Even more joystick waggling. Uneven parallel bars, swing gracefully. Glide smoothly. Slam your pelvis painfully into the opposite bar. Fall clumsiliy to the floor. Get laughed at. The



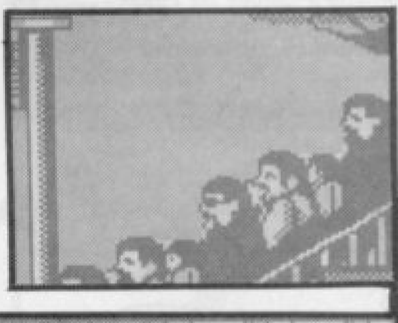
rings; ouch. Try to perform flips and things while suspending yourself six foot above the floor by the use of two parallel rings. You won't do it.

Hurdles; this is more or less as everybody else portrays it, only this time, fall once and you're out of the running.

Pole vault; this is unusual. The camera is strategically placed on the end of your pole during the run up, but then changes to a side during the vault itself.

The game uses the usual Epyx system of playing all or some of the games, and comes complete with an eight player facility, full opening and closing sequence and (disk only) the option to save world records to disk.

The other feature, which all Epyx products sadly have, is multiload. Oh no! This could have been a disastrous fault, if only there was a brilliant game for it to ruin. Sadly there isn't.



The Games – Summer Edition has suffered two great blows in its transition from other eight-bit formats. It looks poor and it plays badly. A lot of the sprites are very badly designed, and the background can cause a lot of problems, attribute-wise.

As for the playability, there just isn't any fun involved at all. Either the programming team at Epyx haven't fully realised the Spectrum's capabilities, or the humble Speccy just isn't built for Epyx Games.

Oh Well, maybe **The Games – Sunday Afternoon Edition** will be good■

ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

THE GAMES – SUMMER EDITION *Label:* ***Eoyx*** *Author:* ***In house*** *Price:* ***£9.99*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
71	57
48	53
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Good in theory, but for some reason the game doesn't provide the goods.

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

OVERALL **59**

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1

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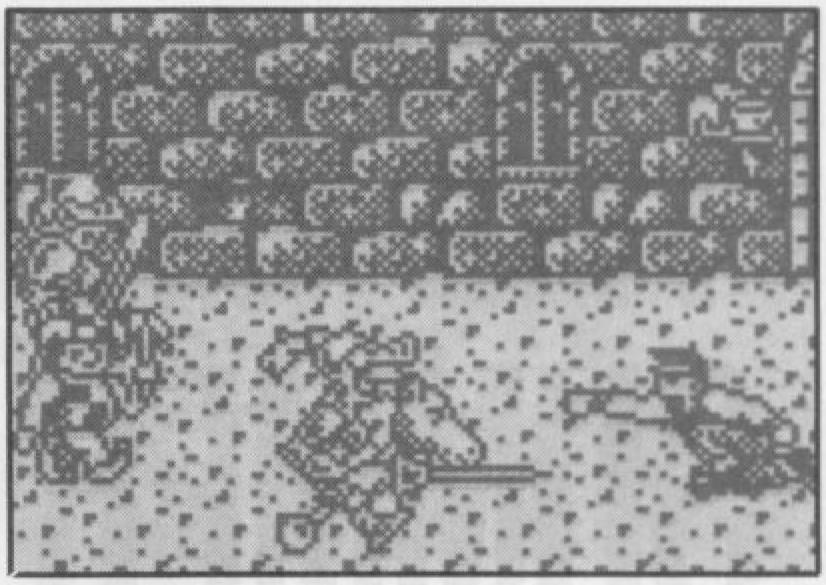
FREEBIES A GO-GO

Yes, it's official. That man Sean from Castle Computers is a stark staring ruddy maddo. He must be because he just gives Speccy games away like there's no tomorrow. Does he do it because he loves SU readers sooooo much? Or is it because he likes to chuck his money away? Nah, like we said before, he does it 'cos he's a complete loon, that's why!

So what's on offer this month troopers and troopettes?

There's Microprose Soccer at £6.99
Real Ghostbusters at £7.50
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Look at that lot, great eh? All that lot is coming to you at a massive £2 off the usual price. And that's not all



(phew, slow down please – everyone at SU). If you buy one of the above you can also pick one of the below for no charge whatsoever (yes, it's true – free, zilch, nought and zero). What more could you want out of life? Here are the free games for you to choose from:

Biggles
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Right, altogether now . . . "thank you Castle Computers".

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BUTCHER HILL

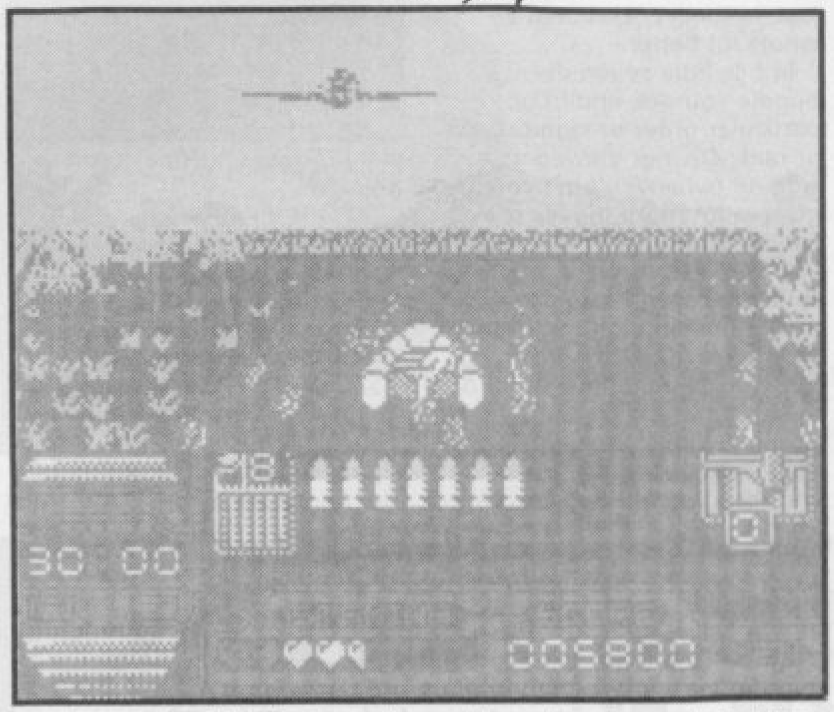
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BUTCHER HILL

You lot out there think you're well 'ard don'tcha? Let's see how 'ard you really are. Are you the type that wreaks havoc throughout the school, scattering 1st year wimpos as you go? Or do you cower in the cloakroom while the girls from your needlework lesson turn your anorak inside out and eat your mittens? The big question is, are you 'ard enough to play Butcher Hill?

Butcher Hill, you should know by now, is a blasty blasty 'Nam epic from those saucy scamps at Gremlin Graphics. It includes sooo much bombing, shooting, hurtling along deadly rivers, having things dropped on your head by passing planes; rocks, mines and patches of weeds that you'll probably pass out just thinking about it, let alone playing it.

Now do you still think



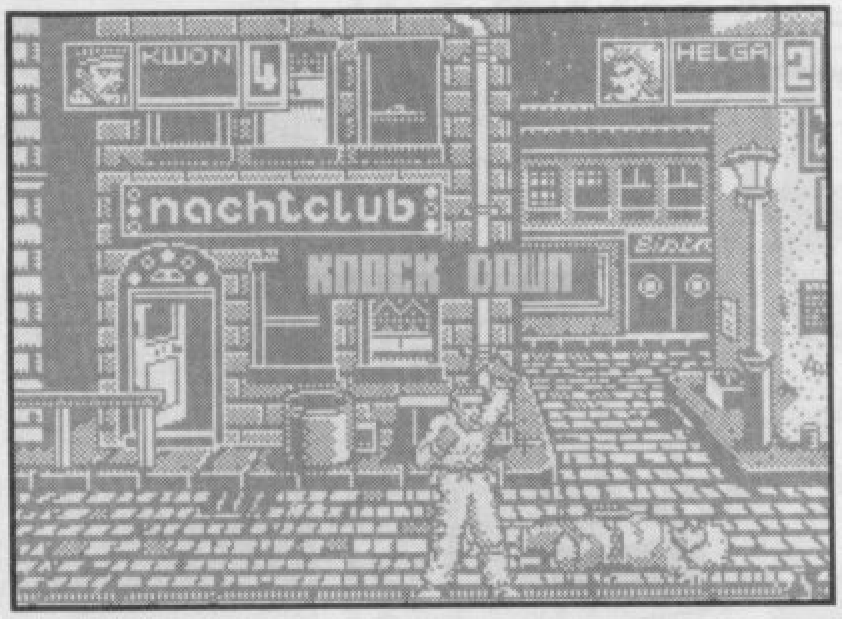
you're up to all this as well as capturing and blowing up an enemy village at the end of the game?

You do? Well ruddy flip you must be bloomin' 'ard. We certainly don't want to mess with you.

Now, the important thing to do is fill out that Butcher Hill Smash Coupon and send it off today. What's that, you'll get your mum to help you. Pah, and you said you were really 'ard. What a pansie!

HUMAN KILLING MACHINE

Do you like skipping through fields of daisies cuddling fluffy bunnies as you go and wishing a cheery good morning to Mister Squirrel? You do? Okay lads pass the strait jackets! Nah, really we know you like crashing around like a mad loon on Vimto mashing anything that crosses your path into the pavement. So we wouldn't want to break a habit of a lifetime so we're giving you a chance of nabbing that sooper dooper beat-'em-about the bod *Human Killing Machine* from US Gold.



The idea behind the game is to tour around the world threatening the habitants of such countries as Russia, Germany and Spain and bashing up anyone who so much as breathes in your direction. There are five levels to punch your way through, and if you liked *Streetfighter* you'll most probably be pretty happy with HKM. We gave it a jolly sparkling review in the March issue and feel that you really shouldn't miss this opportunity to have a great game and save a whole £2 in dosh. Get the message – now get coupon filling.

3

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HUMAN KILLING MACHINE

Send coupon (with your name and address) to: HKM Smash Offer, US Gold Ltd, Units 2/3 Holford Way, Birmingham B6 7AX, with a cheque for £6.99 (cass, £10.00 (disc) made payable to US Gold Ltd. Offer closes June 30th.

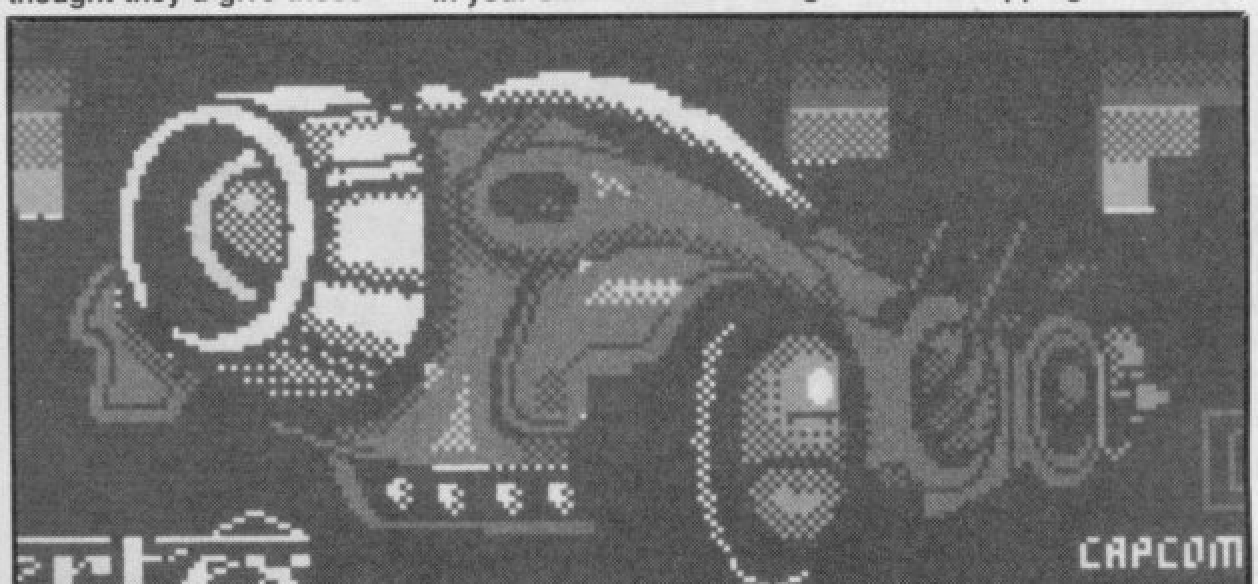
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LAST DUEL

Due to the massive response from you lot when we last gave you a Smash Coupon for *Last Duel*, those snuggly wuggly folks at US Gold thought they'd give those who missed out last time a chance to get their grubby mitts on a copy of the game at a smidge of the original price.

As you should already know *Last Duel* is that smashing drivey extravaganza where you are in your skimmer whooshing along like nobody's business one minute, then you turn into a spaceship and blast through the milky way kerzapping everything that isn't nailed down – great stuff.

We know we've got you all hyped up now and you want to play *Last Duel* so badly. Well matey boys here's your chance. Send your Smash Coupon off today and a copy will soon be hairing down the motorway to you lasers a-zapping.



4

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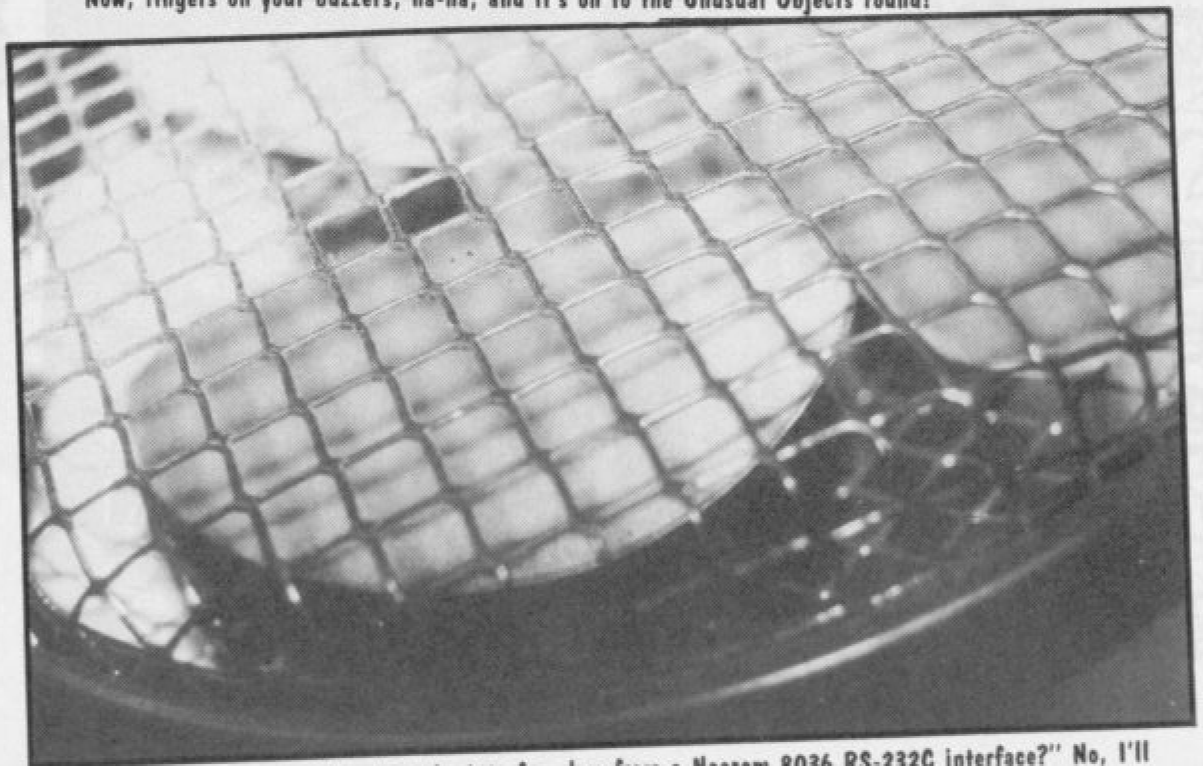


FINGER ON YOUR BUZZER

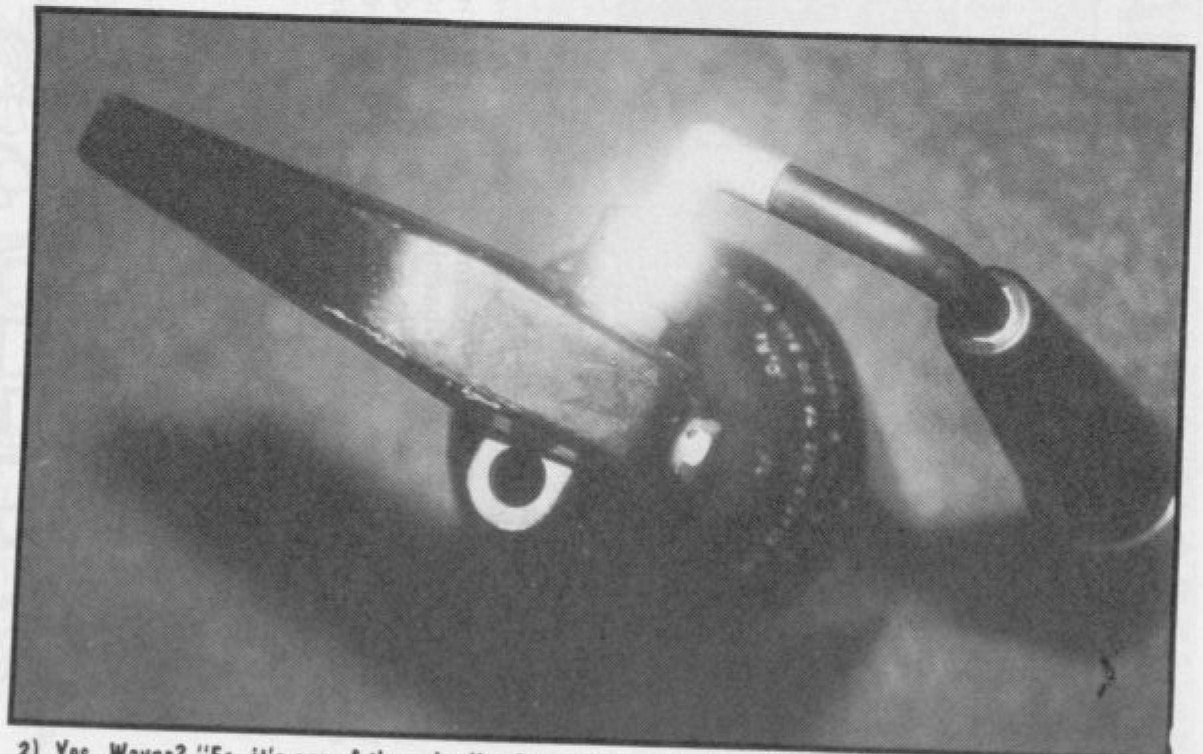


It's the zany game you all love to play – Spot the Family! This month we have two typical families – the Smeleys from Southend and the Plunketts from Chipping Sodbury. Mr Smedley is a chartered accountant, and his hobbies are building matchstick models of matchboxes and collecting serial numbers of dog licences. Mrs Smedley describes herself as "A full-time home-maker", though this isn't how Mr Smedley describes her. The Smedley children are Wayne, 14, whose hobbies are computers, computers and computers, and Waynetta, 12, who likes ponies and vodka. Mr Plunkett is an insurance salesman who likes reading Frederick Forsyth, but not his books. Mrs Plunkett is a librarian who likes rambling and hamsters, and the Plunkett children are Tommy, 13, who likes model aeroplanes, and Tanya, 18, who likes nightclubs and older men.

Now, fingers on your buzzers, ha-ha, and it's on to the Unusual Objects round!



1) Yes, Mr Smedley . . . "Er, is it the interface bus from a Nascom 8036 RS-232C interface?" No, I'll pass that over to the Plunketts . . . Mrs Plunkett? "Ooh, it looks to me like . . . yes, I'm sure . . . is it an electric fan?" No, I'm sorry. You're both wrong: it is in fact the steel mesh protecting



2) Yes, Wayne? "Er, it's one of them deadly alien sci-fi robots from Battle of the Intergalactic Washing Machine Salesmen, isn't it?" No, over to the Plunketts . . . Tanya? "Well, I thought it might be one of Bros' earrings, but in fact I'm sure it's a fire extinguisher." Sorry, I can't allow it. It's a little household robot doing the hoovering.

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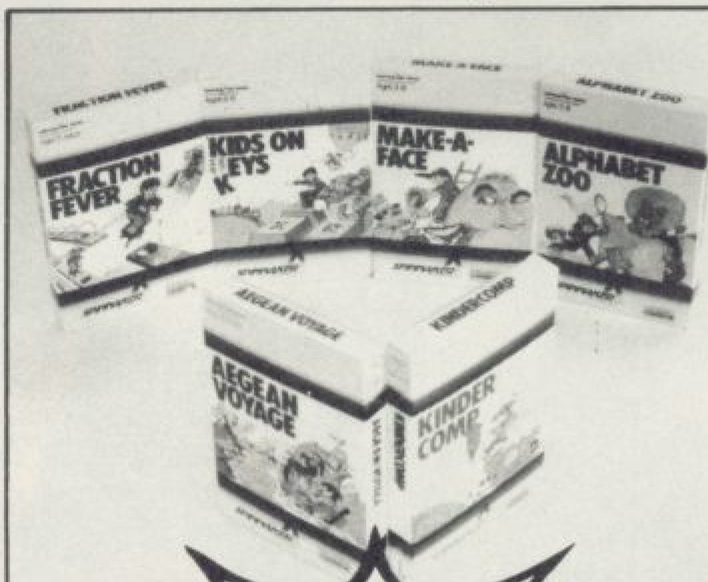
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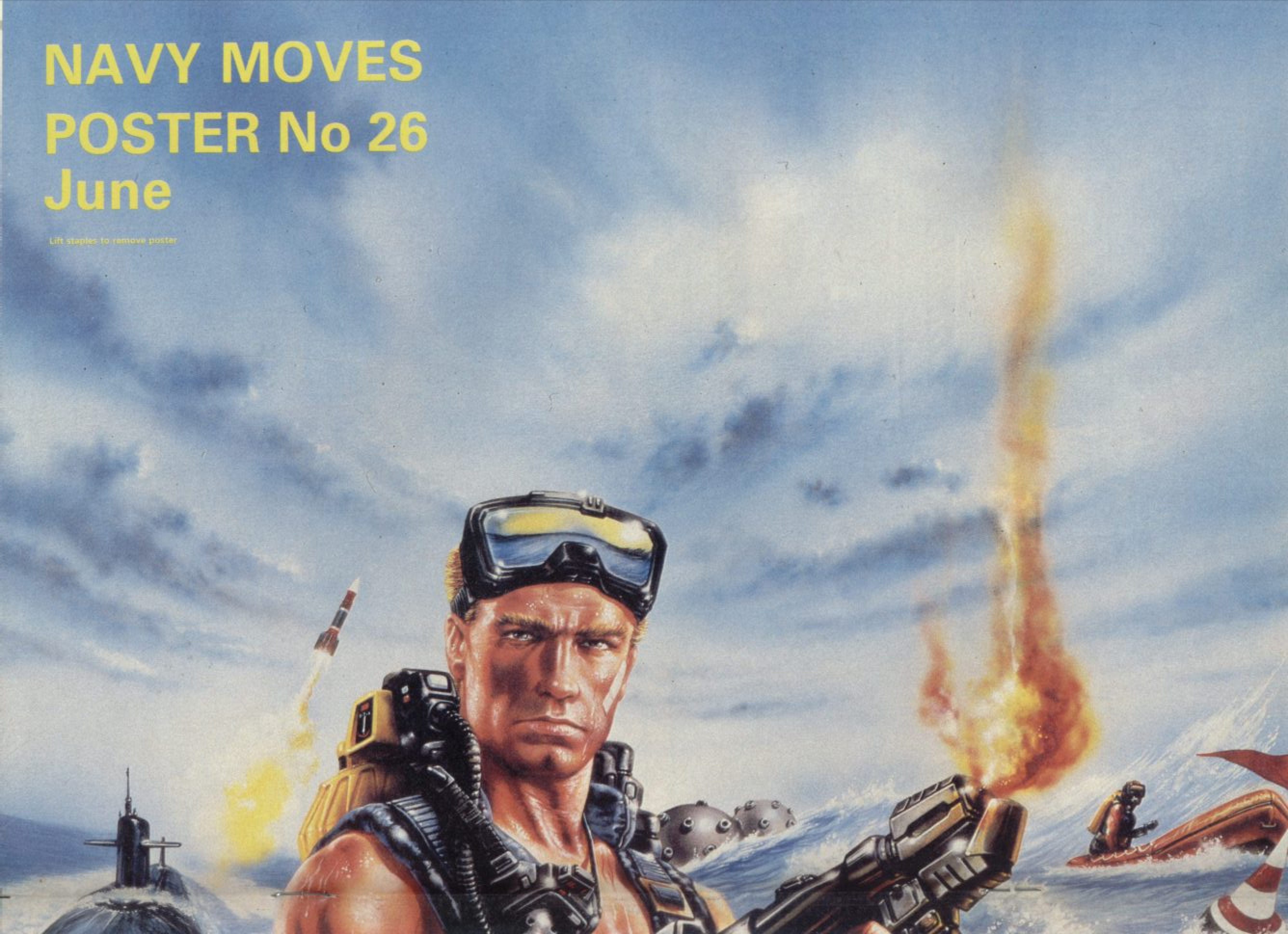
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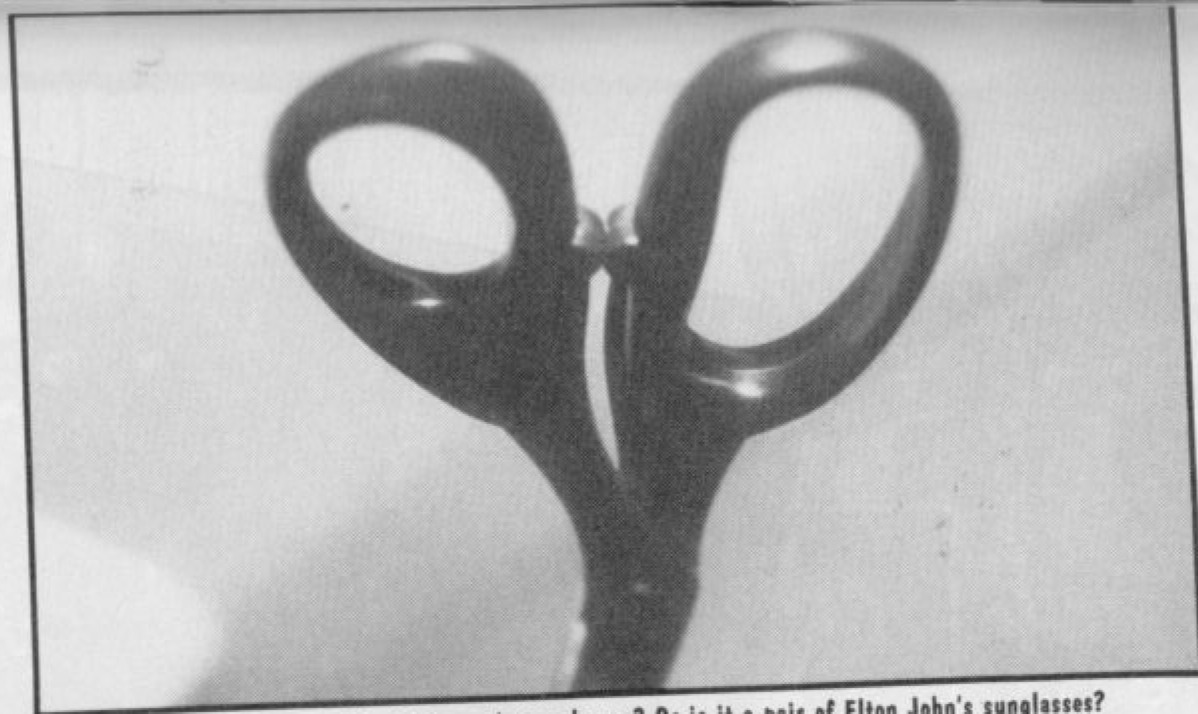

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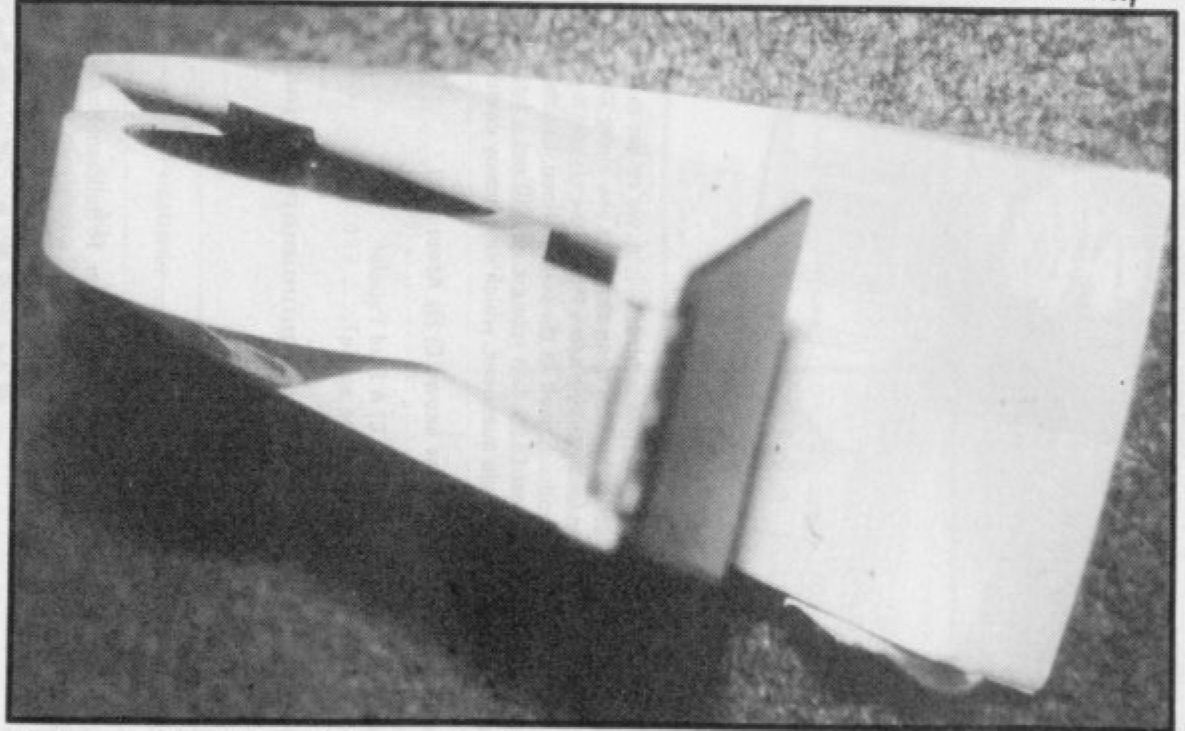
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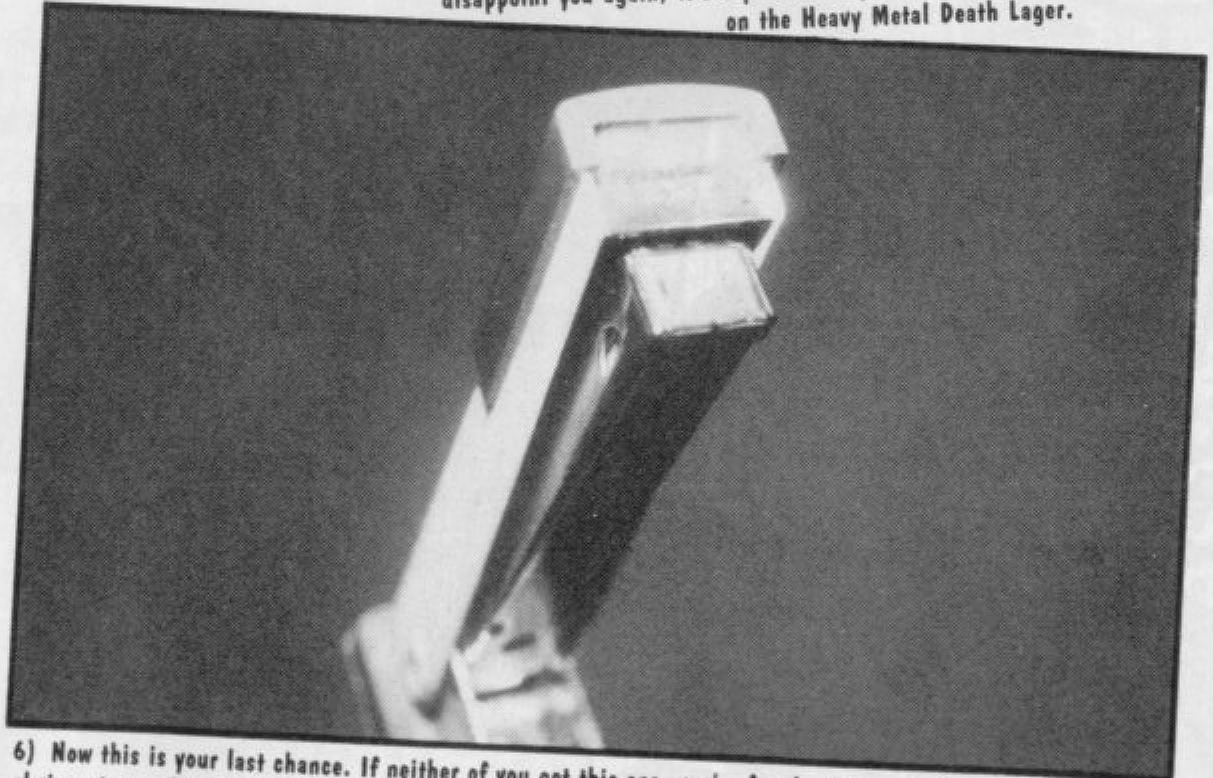
3) Waynetta. "Is it a shaffle girth from a fetlock strap?" No . . . Tommy? Well, Robin, I don't know about you, but I'd bet my entire Airfix collection that it's a telephone receiver." I'm sorry, you're both light years away from the truth . . . it's a flying saucer from the Zarg nebula just about to release a horribly destructive death ray.



4) Mrs Smedley. "Is it a pair of Liberace's sunglasses? Or is it a pair of Elton John's sunglasses? No . . . it's Dame Edna's sunglasses . . . no — I give up." Over to you, Plunketts . . . "We've talked it over, and we've taken a vote, and we're absolutely convinced it's a pair of scissors." Sorry, I have to disappoint you again, it's a pair of Tony Dillon's glasses after a night on the Heavy Metal Death Lager.



5) Now what about this one? Wayne — "It's the RAM expansion for an Issue Two Sinclair ZX Spectrum Personal Computer incorporating an infra-red joystick interface and 128 Meg ROM expansion with graphics enhancement card and food processor." Absolutely wrong — Mrs Plunkett? "It's an ordinary everyday Sellotape dispenser, Robin. It's just like the one I use in the library. In fact, I think it IS the one I use in the library." No, I have to cast doubt on the genetic purity of your ancestors once again; it's an attachment to convert your Spectrum into a spaghetti-twister.



6) Now this is your last chance. If neither of you get this one, you're for the chair. Mr Smedley? "It's quite obvious to me Robin. It's the rolling bogie from a Series 2 8-16-8 Great Western Railways Steam Shunter with afterburner attachment." Plunketts? "Erm . . . it looks like a strange intergalactic robot to us, Robin . . ." No. That was your last chance. It's a stapler. And you're history. Next month: The Sinclairs from Cambridge vs The Sugars from Brentwood. We can't wait!?!

COMPETITION

5-4-3-2-1



THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO!

5 . . . 4 . . . 3 . . . 2. . . 1 . . . that's how many Thunderbirds videos we've got to give away in our F.A.B. contest! (Five, that is.)

Yes, those woodenheads from Grandslam have been stringing you along long enough. Now it's time to launch the game of the cult Sixties TV puppet series, Thunderbirds, and Anderson fans can win some vids of the classic movie *Thunderbirds Are Go.* Meet all the diminutive superheroes – Jeff Tracy, sons Alan, Virgil, Gordon, John and Scott – as well as the sinister Hood. Can the lads save the Mars probe Zero X from the Hood's sabotage attempts? Find out in the fantabulous video, normal cost £8.99. Five runners-up will get a futuristic Thunderbirds T-Shirt from Grandslam.

All you have to do is answer the simple questions, which any dummy could do, and the Thunderbirds team could be winging their way towards you!

1) What does F.A.B. stand for?
A) Father's a B*****d B) No-one knows C) Fly About a Bit

2) What was Thunderbird Six?
A) A giant motormower B) A biplane C) A Ford Popular

3) What pop star appears in puppet form in the movie?
A) Prince B) Madonna C) Cliff Richard

Answers: 1) 2) 3)

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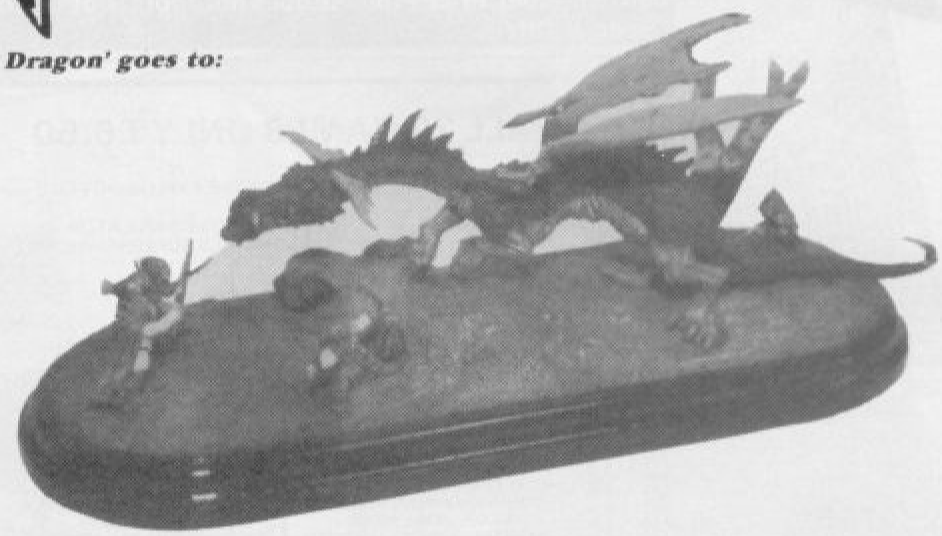
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COMPETITION WINNERS

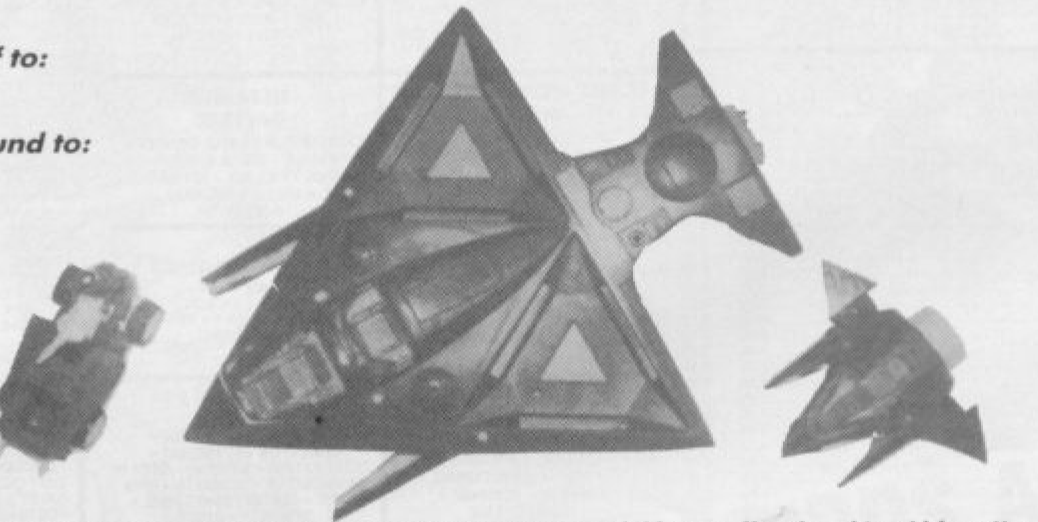
Righty-ho, off we jolly well go with winners of some of our super smashing lovely compos from issues gone by. First out of the SU golden envelope are the results of the 'WIN A DRAGON' compo. All of the prizes are courtesy of Games Workshop. Have you nabbed any booty . . . read on.

The 'ready painted by Tim Noonan for your delight Giant Imperial Dragon' goes to Anthony Boyce, Dorset.

The 'paint it yourself matey Giant Imperial Dragon' goes to:
B Shimmings, St Leonards-on-Sea
Zombie Dragons go to:
Campbell Bruce, Glasgow
Marc Tate, Eastbourne
Fantasy Regiments go to:
David Arundel, Pontefract
Danny Bickford, Essex
Owen Sweeney, Perthshire
Nathan Griffiths, Maidenhead
John Brealey, Nottingham
Skeleton Regiments go to:
Neil McLeod, Glasgow
Lewis Atkinson, Penrith
Gavin Carter-Evans, Mid Glam

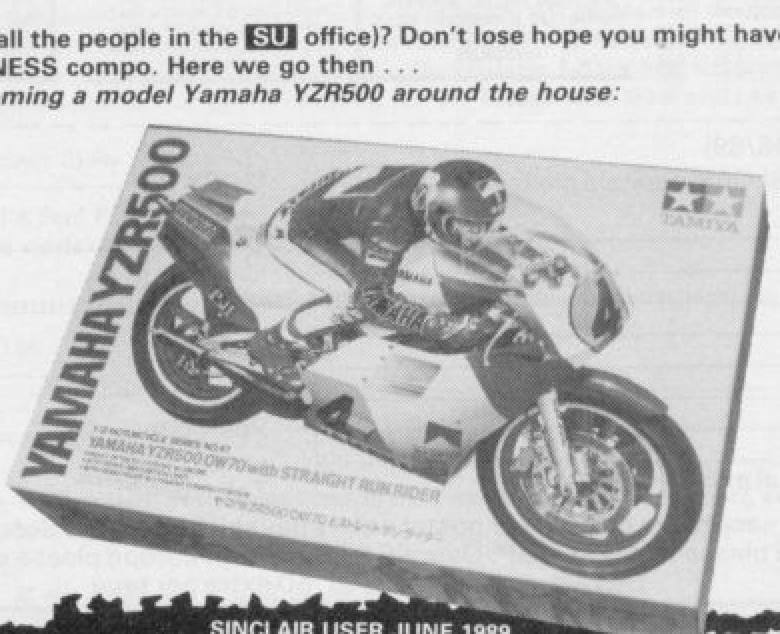


Next out of the shimmering envelope are the 'WIN A SPACESHIP' compo people. Prizes were put up by Virgin Mastertronic. (Said in best Oscar Award voice) 'And the winner is . . .'
Shadowbat winging its way to:
Angus Watt, Morayshire
Shadow Parasites whooshing off to:
Jonathan Martin, Chigwell
Michael Arnold, Leeds
Shadow Invader kerzooming round to:
Noel Nicolas, Jersey
Astro Marines toodling off to:
Nathan Twigge, Derbyshire
Peter Cruden, Aberdeenshire



Moving right along then, the next two compos are oldies from way back in December 88 and January of this year. You thought we'd forgotten didn't you, well nah you're wrong! First up is the AIRBORNE RANGER compo with prizes stolen from Microprose.
Military civil highly trained killer outdoor survival tent parachuting down to:
M Green, Accrington
Military style highly trained killer sleeping bags squashed through the letter boxes of:
O Dawson, Leeds
B Stuart, Inverness

Haven't you won anything yet (shame – all the people in the SU office)? Don't lose hope you might have bagged a goody in the last compo on this page, MOTORBIKE MADNESS compo. Here we go then . . .
This lot here are soon to be broom brooming a model Yamaha YZR500 around the house:
Helen Saville, Bolton
B Coutinho, Leics
M Hall, Roxton
A Wilson, Mansfield
D Thomas, Woking
A Hulmes, Timperley
C Leese, Erdington
Helen Williamson, Elgin
L O'Brien, Grangemouth
Miss E Hilton, Mossley

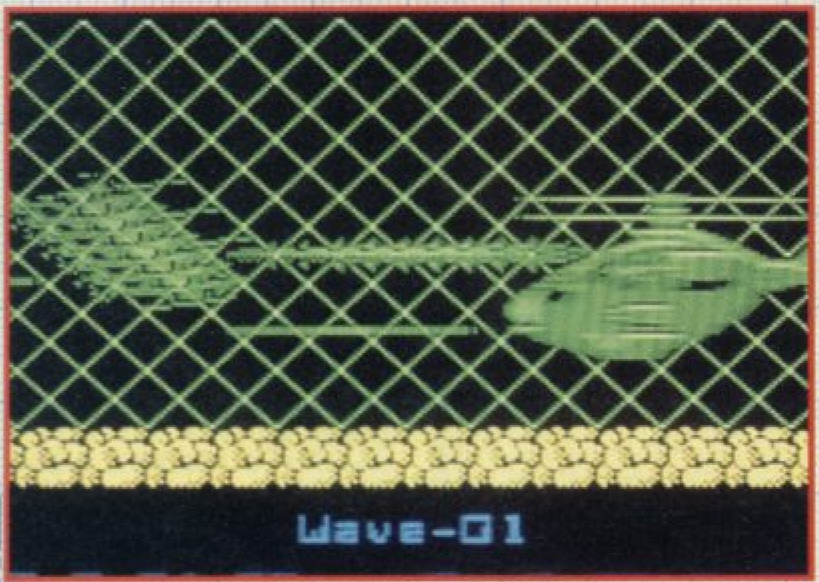


BLUE

How do the games we all marvel at appear on the Spec? It certainly isn't magic. Exactly how is a

SILKW

Silkworm was programmed by Random Access, the development arm of The Sales Curve Ltd. **Silkworm** is a Tecmo coin-op, the licence of which is owned by The Sales Curve Ltd. It has been the policy of Random Access to only employ people that we feel are right for the job. Given our high standards only a few of those people who send demos to us are ever employed – this tough attitude means that we can guarantee quality throughout all of our products. The game is going to be released around May time, being distributed by Virgin. Virgin and The Sales Curve have concluded a production and distribution agreement with Virgin, whereby Virgin shave the exclusive right to



distribute **Silkworm** together with some other exciting coin-op conversions, such as **The Ninja Warriors, Gemini Wing, Continental Circus** and Shinobi.

GRAPHICS

The graphic artist on all versions of **Silkworm** was Ned Langman. Ned is 19 and started doing graphics for his own BASIC games on the ZX81. He quickly got fed up with the limitations of the ZX81 and moved onto the VIC120. From there it was a small step to the Commodore 64 and finally, the Amiga. Although **Silkworm** is his first involvement with coin-op conversions, his graphics have received considerable acclaim in the press – the Amiga and Commodore versions have been awarded a Zzap sizzler "... I'd say that some of the graphic effects on the Amiga are better than the coin-op!" (MAFF).

The graphics were originally produced on an ST art package (OCP art studio) as full sixteen colour sprites for use on the Amiga and ST versions of **Silkworm**.

These were then turned into single colour sprites by reducing the number of bit planes from four to one. Stippling was then added to give the impression of a darker colour, for shading and so on.



No sketches were made as all the graphics were copied directly from the Arcade game. Originally we hired a video camera and taped the entire game from start to finish and then paused the video to see particular sprites. This method turned out be be not very useful, since the picture quality of the video wasn't sufficient. The actual arcade game had no pause function on it (as some do), so after contacting several arcade game board designers, we decided it would be alright to stop the game by grounding the HALT line on the Z80. This worked fine but by the end of the project we had burnt out around five Z80 chips – luckily then cost under £5 each . . . we wouldn't like to repeat the process with a 68000 based arcade machine!



The most time consuming drawing the masks – whenever a helicopter is drawn an accompanying mask was also drawn (this is, in effect, an inverted picture of the helicopter and is used as a stencil to cut a hole out of the background into which the helicopter fits). Due to changes



PRINT

coin-op or movie converted? These questions and more are answered each month in **BLUEPRINT.**



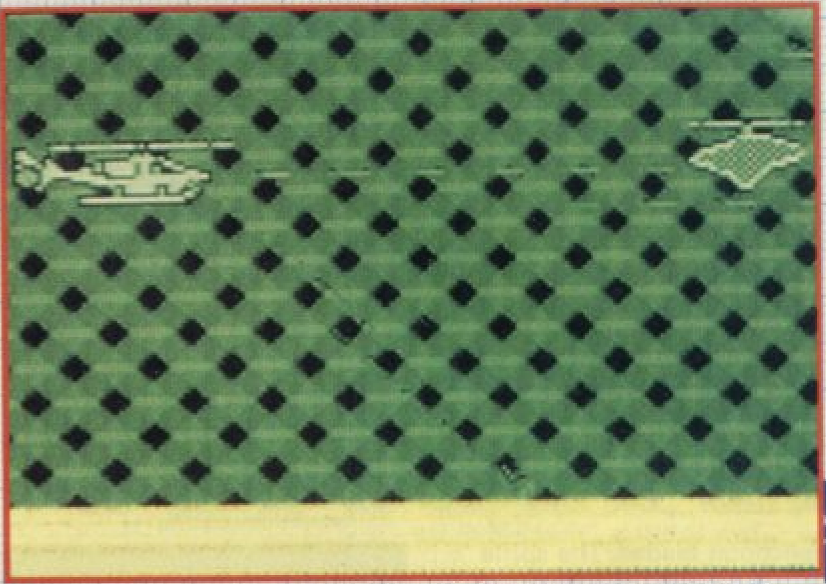
WORM

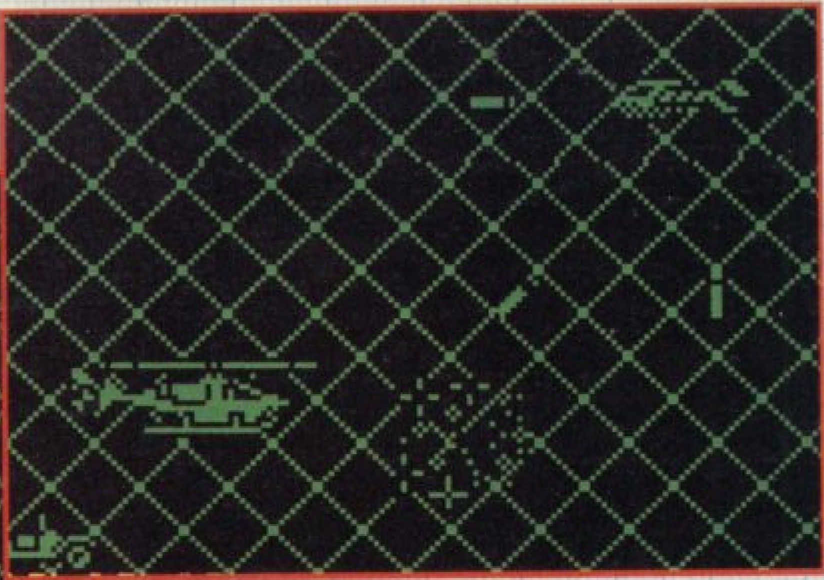
in graphic format the masks had to be redrawn three times –in effect the graphics for Spectrum **Silkworm** were done four times – once for the graphics and three times for the masks!

THE PROGRAM

The Spectrum version of **Silkworm** was written by Nigel Brown. Nigel is now 28, married with four children. He started programming on a ZX81 which he built himself. "It didn't work," he says, "bu then none of them did!" His more notable past projects include **Andy Capp** and **GI Hero** – he has also written quite a few budget titles.

Nigel is currently working on **The Ninja Warriors**. In **Silkworm** (as explained later) we decided to leave out the scrolling backgrounds. For **The Ninja Warriors** Nigel has developed a technique doing a smooth screen scrolling – he is currently spending time optimising this code . . .







SCROLLING

Although **Silkworm** is a horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up the player has no interaction with the background (unlike **R-Type** for example). Because of this we felt that it was a waste of processor time to actually made the backgrounds scroll – we would rather have a fast game with plain backgrounds than a S . . . L . . .
O . . . W game with a smooth scrolling background.

To give the impression of forward motion a repeated block technique was used – the background is made up of a pattern which moves, giving the impression of a scroll (it's best to see it in action to understand it).

When programming the Spectrum, sprites and all graphics are not actually drawn onto the screen, they are drawn onto a 'back-buffer' and this buffer is then copied onto the visible play area when it is complete. This prevents the ever deadly sprite flicker problem, because you are never seeing something as it is being drawn (which gives rise to flicker). Using this technique it is necessary to clear the background of the 'back-buffer' each time new sprites are placed on it (this prevents sprites from leaving trails as they move). Whether this background is cleared out with a solid black background or with a repeated pattern makes no real difference to how quickly the computer can do it, so we simply clear the 'back buffer' with a slightly different pattern each time.

Initially we thought that it would be possible to have a scrolling background so Ned drew all of the backgrounds (seven in total), but eventually memory constraints and game speed meant that we couldn't use them.

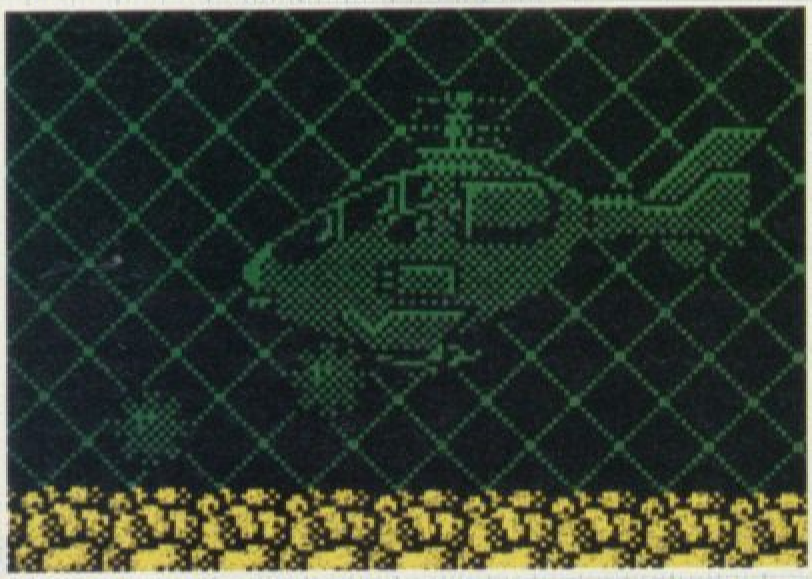
For the technically minded the 'back-buffer' is cleared by pointing the stack pointer to the end of the buffer and simply PUSHing registers. The registers pushed are set up with the pattern used for the background – each PUSH moves the stack-pointer up through the buffer, so repeated pushing will eventually clear

BLUEPRINT

the buffer totally. This is the fastest way (that we know of) of clearing large areas of memory.

ANIMATION

Most sprites have two animations – these two animations are used to give the impression of rotating



helicopter blades. The sprite with the most number of animations is the jeep, which has to be able to jump (using three animations) and it also has to have many different animations for all the different angles of the gun turret.

All sprites are built up out of 24 by 24 pixel blocks. Large enemies are built up out of several sprites 'glued' together – the end level helicopter, for example, is built up from 8 sprites. Up to 20 sprites were allowed on screen at a time, this limit gave us the correct game speed and game difficulty without making the game seem unduly restricted.

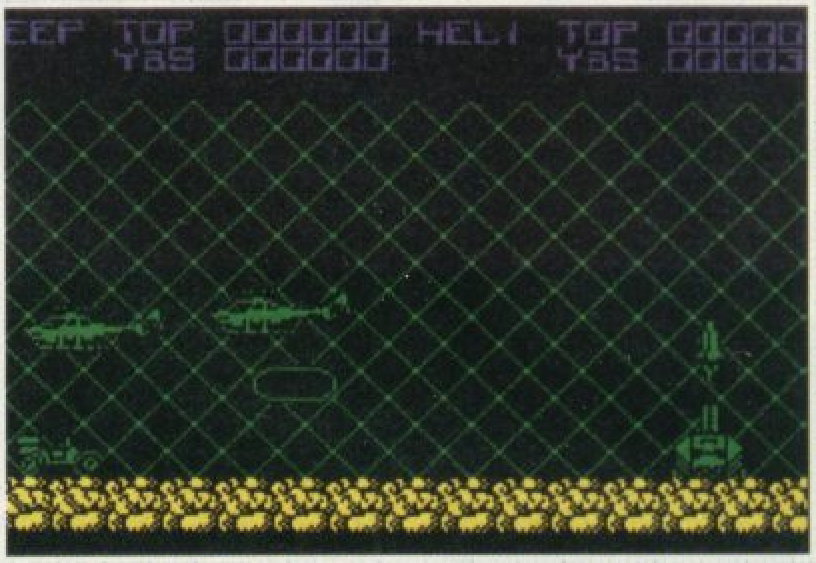
We had no real colour problems as the play area is in only two colours. The parallaxing foreground is a different colour but no sprites are allowed to pass in front of it (they disappear behind it).

SPEED

As is always our policy speed of game play always comes first – if a game is no good to play it doesn't matter if it looks wonderful because no one will ever play it! Naturally wherever we can we try to hit the perfect compromise.

Silkworm isn't smoothed – in other words the game will speed up and slow down as the number of aliens on screen changes. In this way we keep the processor constantly busy, and therefor the game running as fast as it can.

The entire game was made to run as fast as possible by spending a large amount of time going through the code again and again looking for ways to improve its efficiency.





Most speed can be gained by making the most frequently used routines as quick as possible – even if they end up taking more memory. For example, it is quite frequent for a program to 'loop', ie do the same thing many times in a row, by removing the loop and simply duplicating the code many times the program runs faster (since the processor doesn't have to waste time counting down how many loops it has left to do, and doesn't have to jump back to the start of the loop again).

By using undocumented op-codes the processor can be made to do two things with one instruction that usually require two instructions. These op-codes (ie machine code instructions) do not 'officially' exist since Zilog (the designers of the Z80 chip) may withdraw them from new Z80 chips in the future – however, these op-codes are so widely used that if Zilog were to have a change of heart a great many games wouldn't work! Hopefully Zilog will be sensible (the Z80 chip is now over nine years old and it is very unlikely that Zilog will do anything at all with it).

OTHER VERSIONS

The Spectrum version was actually converted from the Amiga version! During development of the product we didn't have enough **Silkworm** boards to go round (one for the artist, one for the sixteen bit programmers etc), so the Spectrum version was copied from the Amiga version (the Amiga version is virtually indentical to the original).

The entire Spectrum program took about three months from start to end. The Spectrum version was started later than the other versions since we wanted to find the right person for the job – this meant that Nigel could use the extra experience of the other programmers if he ran into any problems.

CONTROLS

The main problem with the controls was getting enough functions into one joystick button! The arcade game had three – fire, bomb and tilt helicopter (which moved turret on the jeep controls).

We ended up by the helicopter losing the tilt option (no great loss) and firing both bombs and bullets at the same time. For moving the turret on the jeep we made it so that holding down the fire button while moving the joystick up/down had the desired effect.

PROBLEMS

The hardest part of the program was making the aliens move a pixel at a time. This required writing 8 different routines (for speed), which all, more or less, did the same thing. In **Silkworm** we didn't have enough memory to store 'pre-shifted version', so Nigel had to develop a method of calculating all the positions of a sprite while the game was running.

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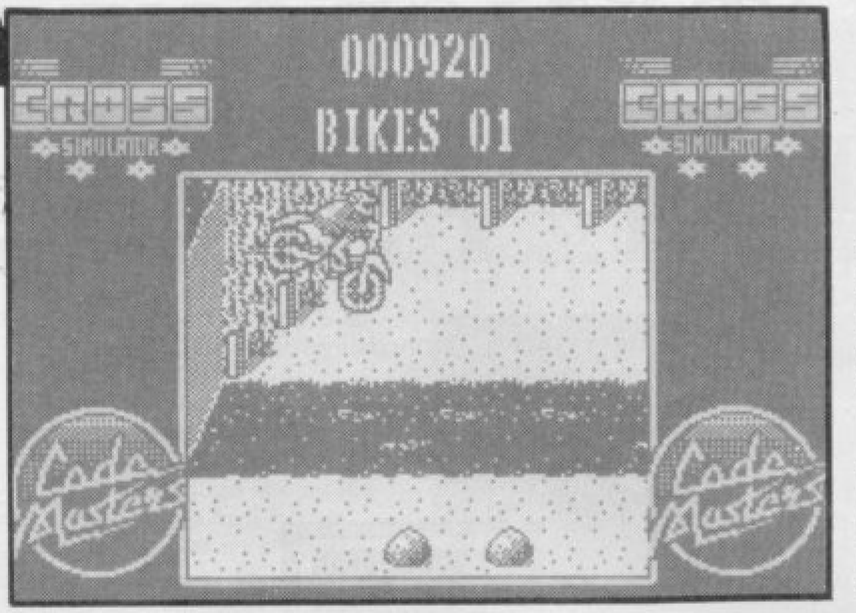
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MOTO CROSS SIMULATOR

They have their good days. And they have their bad days. **Moto Cross Simulator** must have been written on a wet Thursday afternoon in Slough.

Codemasters' series of budget simulators wobble up and down in quality like, er, something extremely wobbly indeed. When they're good (like **Jet Bike Simulator**) they're very very good; when they're bad (like **Pro Ski Simulator**) they make you very sad.

Moto Cross Simulator veers and skids more towards the downside; there might be a game hidden in there somewhere, but it's so irritatingly difficult to play, so poorly presented and so, grrrrr, annoying, that I can't find much good to say about it.

The concept's OK. Imagine a 3-D version of **Kikstart** – all motorbikes, jumps, ramps, obstacles and mud – and you've got to the general idea. Steering your Super Mudbuster bike, you have to complete five skill sections, where the challenge is to control your bike and avoid falling off, and four time trials,



where it's a matter of you against the clock. I can only really comment on the "skill" section, because after a solid hour of effort I never managed to complete it and get on to the time trial.

The first problem is that the monochrome backgrounds are so poorly designed that your eyes keep flipping over into the back of your head. Is that a ramp or a drop ahead of me? Is that a slope going up, a wall going sideways or a ditch? By the time you can work it all out, you'll have fallen off dozens of time. All you can do in the first section is to raise or lower your front wheel, and press fire to jump. It took me ages to work out that you have to jump at the bottom of a slope, otherwise you'll fall off. Crazy.

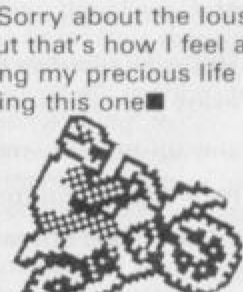
If you can work out how to negotiate the logs and boulders (wheelie, jump, level off), the next challenge is the jump. Now I don't remember seeing a motocross event where the competitors were required to fling themselves over sheer cliffs, but that's all part of this game. Just try to keep your nose up as you land, and you might make it.

Simple slopes and level bits are easy, in fact dull, to negotiate; this just leaves you with the big jump at the end of the level. I must have tried this 200 times, and though I can get to within sight of the finishing flag, I'm stonkered if I can do it without falling off. At this stage my patience evaporated and I flung the computer out of the window.

If there was any incentive to get to the higher levels I might have persevered, but the graphics are dull, the sound minimal (David Whittaker's 128K theme music being largely wasted) and the gameplay is more Moto-irritated than Moto-cross. Sorry about the lousy pun, but that's how I feel about spending my precious life reviewing this one■







ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

MOTO CROSS SIMULATOR *Label:* ***Codemasters*** *Author:* ***Pete Williamson/Neil Adamson*** *Price:* ***£2.99*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
58	40
30	20
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Irritatingly difficult and unrewarding bikey sim, best buried in the mud

Reviewer:

OVERALL **42**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

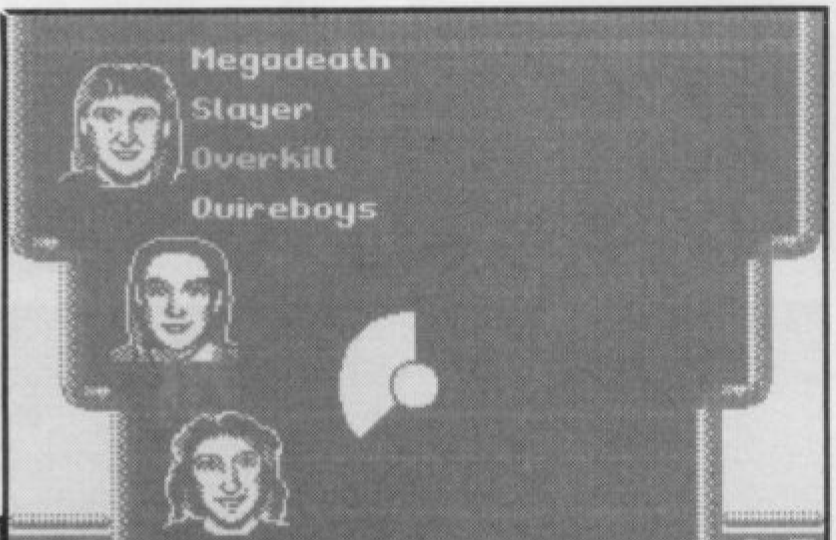
GAMES REVIEW!

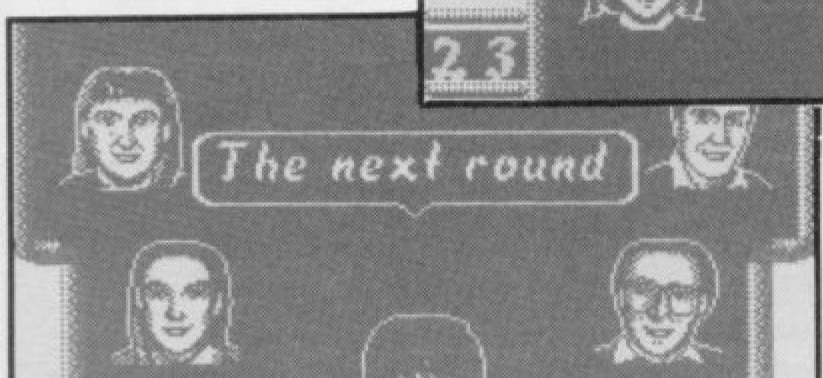
Mike Read's Pop Quiz



Not arf! Oh, that's the wrong DJ. What does Mike Read say? Well, what **does** Mike Read say? I'll be blowed if I can remember. Perhaps this is the problem with Elite's conversion of the board game of the TV series of Mike Read's radio show. Mike Read himself isn't especially interesting.

So, the bonus factors which most licence game rack up by being associated with fab movies or coin-ops or TV shows are largely absent. Instead, it's more down to the fact that the questions are bloody tough that makes **Pop Quiz** a smashing game.





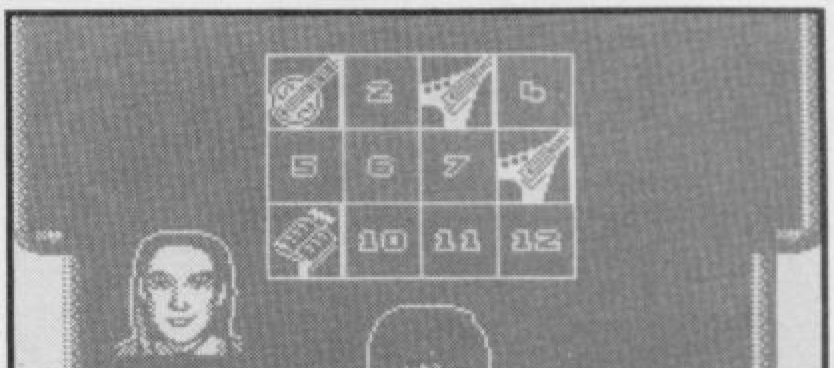
Just as playing those Trivial Pursuit machines in pubs is far more exciting when you're with a roomful of lager frenzied dribbling idiots, **Pop Quiz** certainly comes into its own once you've reached hilarity level.

First up is the Jukebox round. Each member of each team in turn is asked to select an icon indicating which musical style they want to answer questions on. Now the fun really begins. Uncle Mike's scrolling speech bubble presents the brain tinglingly tricky question. Usually something like "Who could be found in the Imperial Bedroom in 1983?" You're then shown four possible candidates, one of whom it's certain even your parents will never have heard of. Using all your skill and judgement (hem) you've got to "plump" in best TV quiz style for an answer. A correct answer incurs points. An incorrect means it's passed over to the opposing team. Ooh.

And so the game goes on. While there are different rounds, the principles remain the same. Each round has a slightly new twist; allowing you to choose hard or easy questions and gambling for bigger bonuses. There's a race-against-the-clock round too, which is actually bloody exciting, though maybe for the panic involved in trying to highlight the correct answer than the interest in the question itself.

Pop Quiz is presented completely satisfactorily. There are semi-digitised pics of Mike Read (phurgh!) as well as members of the teams. Alas you can't digitise yourself and you have to suffer the insane grins of the Elite team. The questions seem to be alternately easy as pie and totally impossible, while some were simply so remarkably dull they weren't worth answering.

It's pretty fab. Of course, if you're not into "pop" or "quizzes" you'll think it's hopeless. Me? I reckon it's the best game Elite has done in ages ■



ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

MIKE READ'S POP QUIZ Label: **Elite**
Author: **In-house** Price: **£8.99** Memory: **48K/128K** Joystick: **Various**

GRAPHICS	SOUND
60	60
80	80
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Fab TV/Board-game conv. Fingers on your buzzers!

Reviewer: Jim Douglas

OVERALL **79**

TWIN TURBO

Erm, well, it's a nice idea isn't it? There's a lot of colour, isn't there? There's plenty of . . . no, sorry I can't keep this up. How am I supposed to review a game positively when it plays as badly as this one? Not only that, but **Turbo V8** is in the same vein as **Out Run** but not nearly as good.

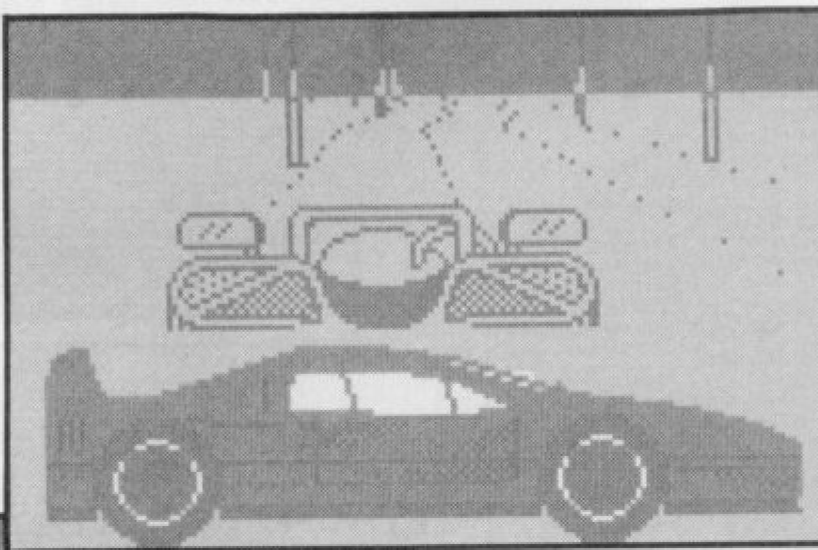
You are driving a Twin Turbo V8, the latest in a long line of supercars. You have to drive a mad 500 mile dash across varying types of US landscape including desert (yellow), winterland (blue) day and night.

Along the way, you get to career through tunnels and industrial piping that hangs between pylons. The road snakes along and loads of cars all travel along in the same direction with the aim of driving just a little bit slower than you so as to cause maximum obstruction.



This is all routine. There are five stages, you have to complete each stage within a chosen time limit, your car has two gears and the road is very hilly. So what new features does the game have to offer? Level three has a low cloud layer.

As you can see, **TTV8** isn't too much of an advancement. That's OK, that's cool. A SEU doesn't have to lead the way forward to be fun. Does it make you come back for more? Do you sweat on the hairpin bends? Do you struggle to see down the hills that quickly disappear from view? Do you duck as you drive under low bridges? Well, not really I'm afraid.





The main problem is the speed of the game. Considering how little there is to update on open road, the game moves appalingly slowly. Even dated products like **Deathchase 2000**, with more on screen than this even at the heaviest of times, move way faster. Going under bridges slows the game further, to a completely unplayable pace. It's a shame, because with a little more speed, the game could be great, much better than **WEC Le Mans.** The only sprites used are the other cars, all side objects and even the road itself are made up of vectors, and not the most complicated ones at that.

The sound is far from brilliant, but the idea behind it works far better than the final product. A click-track gets faster or slower depending on the car's speed, and as opposing cars race past a droning noise gets louder and softer, depending on the distance between you and them.

It seems that, for now, **WEC Le Mans** still holds the standard by which all are to be judged. Come on industry, aren't you going to put up some sort of fight?■



ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

TWIN TURBO V8 *Label:* ***Code Masters*** *Author:* ***Ian Dunlop*** *Price:* ***£1.99*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
59	61
61	55
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

Disappointing race game.

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

OVERALL **59**

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

The best deal for Spectrum Artists bar none

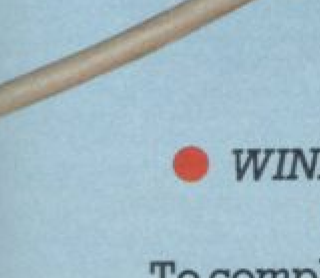
"THE BEST SPECTRUM ARTIST PROGRAM BAR NONE"
SINCLAIR USER CLASSIC, NOVEMBER 1986

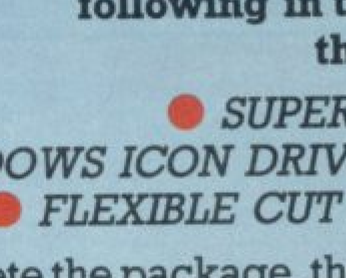


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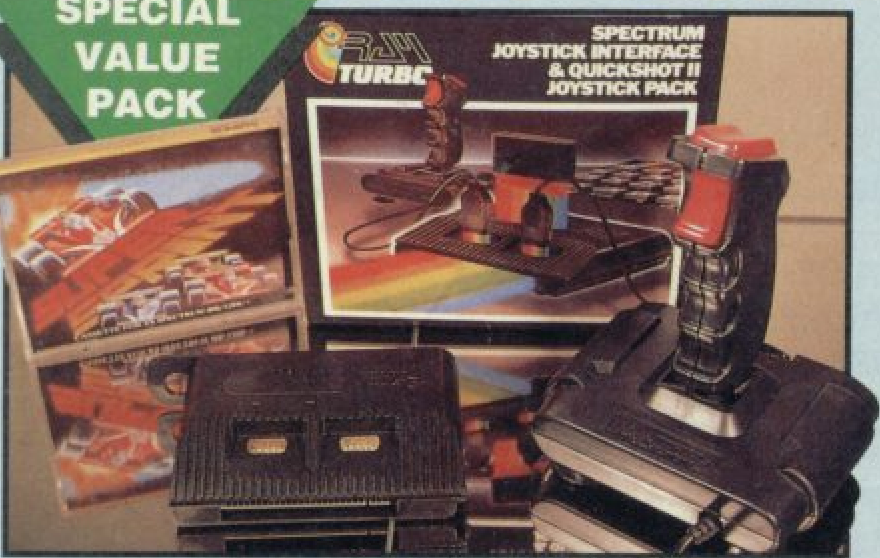
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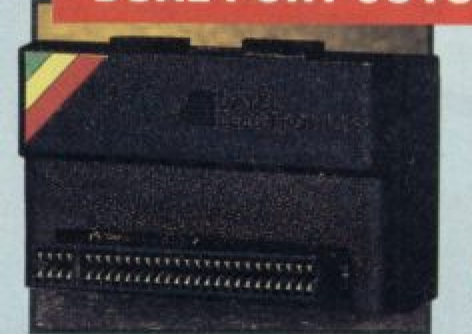
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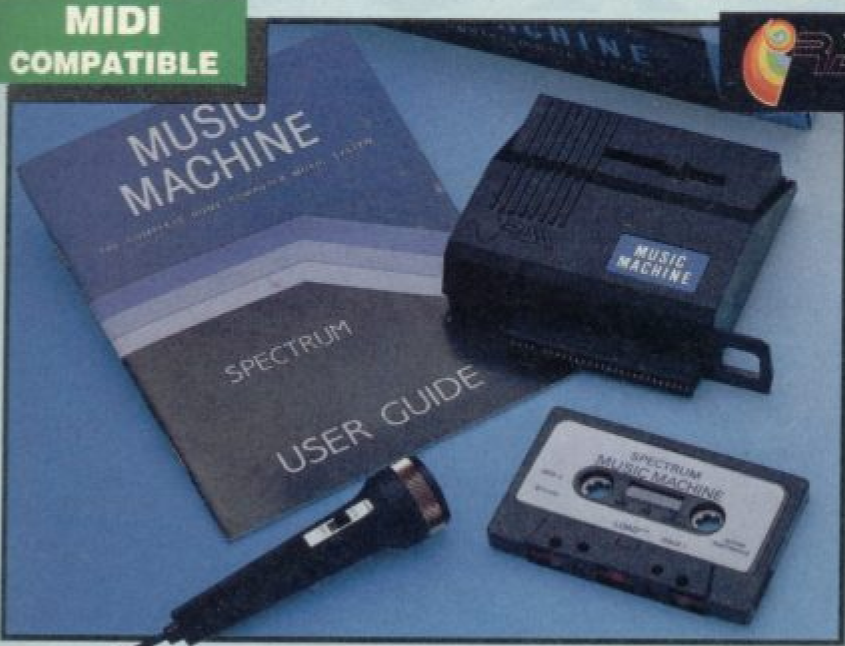
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TH



Dear mortals, I appear to be suffering from Spell-itis at the moment. My anti-rain spell has failed completely. Normally I am kept in a warm cocoon that protects me from the elements, a spell which works on the opposite principle to the thermos flask. If it is too hot or too cold then I am kept at a reasonable temperature. If it is raining then I am kept dry. Normally. Today, however, has seen a disaster in the on-going anti-rain spell department and it is a very soaked sorceress who addresses you. The first person to make a comment about having a wet cloak competition will be banished from the realm.

Fortunately this does not prevent me from bearing news. Being in a privileged position (i.e. a Sorceress) means that I have access to material that others cannot hope to see. For instance, information from Level 9.

Everyone (including, it has to be said, my good self) has been referring to a forthcoming game from Level 9 by the name of **Spook.** A spooky scoop for you, it will not be called Spook, dear mortals, it will be called **Scapeghost.** How do I know this? I have seen it, that is how. Admittedly not on a Spectrum, 'twas on some other insturment of the devil, but I am assured by a Level 9 spokesperson that you will not have too long to wait.

What I saw was a version for play testing, and it looks to be a cracker. Definitely one worth purchasing as soon as it appears. You play the role of Alan Chance, once a detective investigating a chain of drug smugglers, but when the game starts the only thing that you're investigating is your own funeral. Thus the game starts off with you as a ghost, and you have to learn all about being a ghost before you can even begin to think about solving the main puzzle of the game, which is connected with your own murder and said drug smuggling. The first part of the game all takes place in a spooky cemetery, but fortunately a neighbour of yours, the former local landlord Joe Danby, is a friendly sort of ghost and he gives you a tour of the place and introduces you to all the other residents. There's some funny spirits in there I can tell you, like Bob and Edna Willmot, an argumentative couple when you first meet them.

Graveyard humour abounds, all sorts of puns and jokes, with the game itself moving at anything but funereal pace. Another winner for Level 9, that's for sure. I shall keep you posted on this, and any other news.

Talking about keeping people posted, I mentioned a new fanzine last month, a little number called **Spellbreaker.** I hadn't seen a copy then (editors, being mere mortals, panic if one so much as gets a day over the magazine's deadline), but now my gnarled postman has climbed the path and presented me with one. Fanzine, that is. I have to say that the print quality of that first edition of the first issue is pretty atrocious, but cheery editor Mike Brailsford assures me that all duff copies were replaced, things will be better from now on, and the person

DANGER

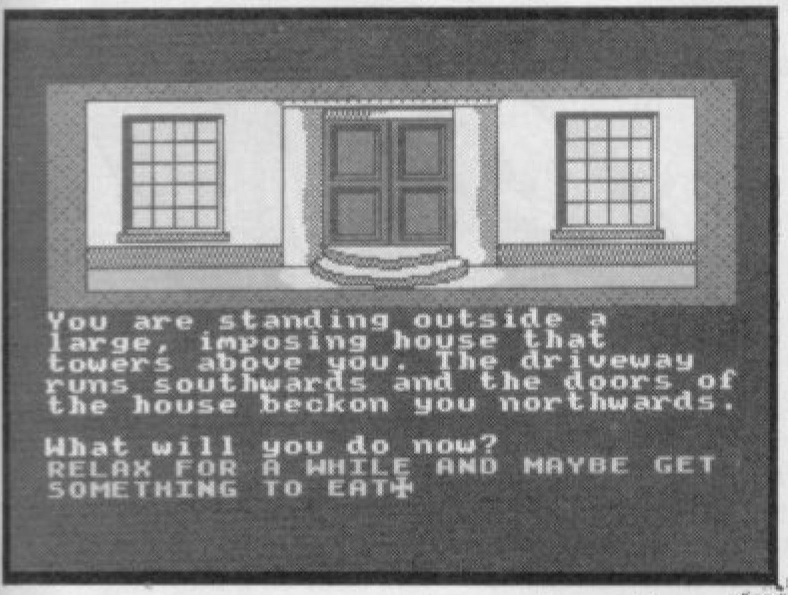
MOUSE continued: Keep the tongs, enter the tunnel, climb up the ladder, enter the stable, take the pliers, return to the yard, go down the mouse hole, enter the dungeon, keep the knife, enter the passage, go south, go west, go west, go south, go west, go along the passage, give him the thread, climb up the steps, play a tune, examine the displays, take the eggs, go to the steps, go through the exit, go down the mousehold, enter the dungeon, keep the tongs, enter the passage, go south, go south, go south, go south, enter the store, take the pegs, leave the store room, return to the maze, go north, go north, go north, go north, keep the tongs, enter the passage, go south, go east, go east, keep the mirror, open the coffin, take the mirror, take the cape, climb up the steps, climb on to the ledge, enter the library, enter the corridor, go down the stairs, pull out the nails, go through the door, take the ladder, go through the doorway, climb up the stairs, enter the library, climb out the window, look down . . . to be continued, just one bit to go now!

PHAROAH'S

TOMB – Climb mountain, get horn, n, get matches, n, move rock, y, enter tomb, drop matches, e, e, e, get cloak, e, rub lamp, get slab, w, get fan, s, s, get ice,m d, e, stand on scales, w, u, w, w, get ring, n, open door, wear cloak, wear ring, enter tunnel, get matches, e, e, s, s, s, e, drop matches, w, n, enter tunnel, e, s, w, s, s, blow horn, drop horn, go through door, w, get rod, s, rub ring, get shield, s, e, w, n, e, e, n, n, drop cloak, drop ring, get key, get ladder, get candle, e, n, w, w, w, drop rod, drop shield, n, enter tomb, e, e, s, s, s, e, drop ladder, drop candle, n, n, pull lever, s, d, s, s, n, w, e, s, s, w, w . . . to be continued.

HE SORCERESS

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responsible for the print quality of the first issue has been converted into part of Birmingham's spaghetti junction. Neat spell, that, must borrow it sometime.

If the print quality's bad (but only for the first one) then the quality of the content is a distinct improvement, so provided things are sorted out for the next issue (I'm waiting . . .) this should be a good addition to the fanzine ranks. Hints, tips, solutions and maps, all in abundance, so for a mere £1.25 it might be worth taking a look if this is the sort of thing that you're after. Lots for the Spectrum (including a few special offers, like the **Time and Magik Trilogy** for £7.99), and the address is 19 Napier Place, South Parks, Glenrothes, Fife KY6 1DX.

One thing they haven't got, although I notice that some others have, is a software swap shop. My spies tell me that a computer club in the vicinity of Sorceress Towers indulges in software swapping (i.e. copying) to a large extent, to the extent of charging money for the copying in fact. This is, of course, illegal. I know that the vast majority of computer users do not break the law in this way, but a curse on those who do. It IS illegal, and it makes software prices higher as companies attempt to recoup their losses. So be warned, pirates, my spies are everywhere!

But back to small companies who do not suffer in the same way, or if they do they they turn a blind eye. I notice in **Spellbreaker** that Zenobi Software have a list of seven titles for the Spectrum, not one of them over £2.49, and on the reverse side of the tape for most of the games is another program of some sort. Good value for money from 26 Spotland Tops, Cutgate, Rochdale, Lancashire OL12 7NX. I give you the address in case you want further details.

Ditto River Sfotware, 44 Hyde Place, Aylsham, Canterbury, Kent CT3 3AL. They have seven tapes as well, all of them containing two adventures (well, all right, one of them contains an adventure and a word "game"), and all apart from the word game one are priced at £2.50; add an extra £1.45 for that. Small companies like these deserve your support, fellow adventurers, otherwise they'll go out of business and we'll all be paying not far short of a tenner or even more. You pays your money and you takes your choice, as I believe some wise sage once put it.

And still on the subject of little companies, anyone who took up the **Crystal Cavern** from Handasoft might be having a few problems, so ever eager to oblige we find that you can only carry four objects at a time but you may wear more. Do not drop the giant wound-up clockwork mouse until you reach the giant rat location. Do not go forward where there is a danger present. The hedgehog, lance, geiger counter, skull, betting slip, horseshoe and manure are useless, as is the chastity belt.

With Jack O'Lantern, you must try to get him and follow him west. With the Angel of Death you have to wave a pin and catch angel on the head of pin (how many angels will fit, I wonder?) At the mouse-hole, you must crush, squash or squeeze the shrinking violet in order to make you tiny enough to go in, and as for the owl you must crush the violet again outside the mouse-hole after getting cheese and pie. To finish for now with a rather stange one, if you're having fun with a gargoyle then try kissing the toad. Don't drop the toad, whatever you do, especially near the mouse-hole, otherwise you'd have toad in the hole.

We'll finish this month with a big company and get you going with **Lancelot.** From the beginning, east, kill knight, yes, run to quest room, wait, wait, south, east, read books (ten times if you want to read all of them), run to arthur, wait (x4), run to logris, "damsel hello", run to beacon, light beacon, run to broch, in, west, down, east, unbolt door, east, "lamorak follow me", west, "lamorak wait, push chest", push chest, down, out, run to mermaid . . . and I will leave you playing with the mermaid. Byeee!

WITTS END

HAMMER OF GRIMOLD

– In the graveyard, Prise Lid then Look In Coffin to find a cross which will prove useful later on. Move Landlord (when he's dead of course!) in the inn to find the trapdoor. It's pointless wearing the backpack as you have to remove it every time you put something into it or take something from it. Search Uniform you receive from the dwarf and you will find a knife.

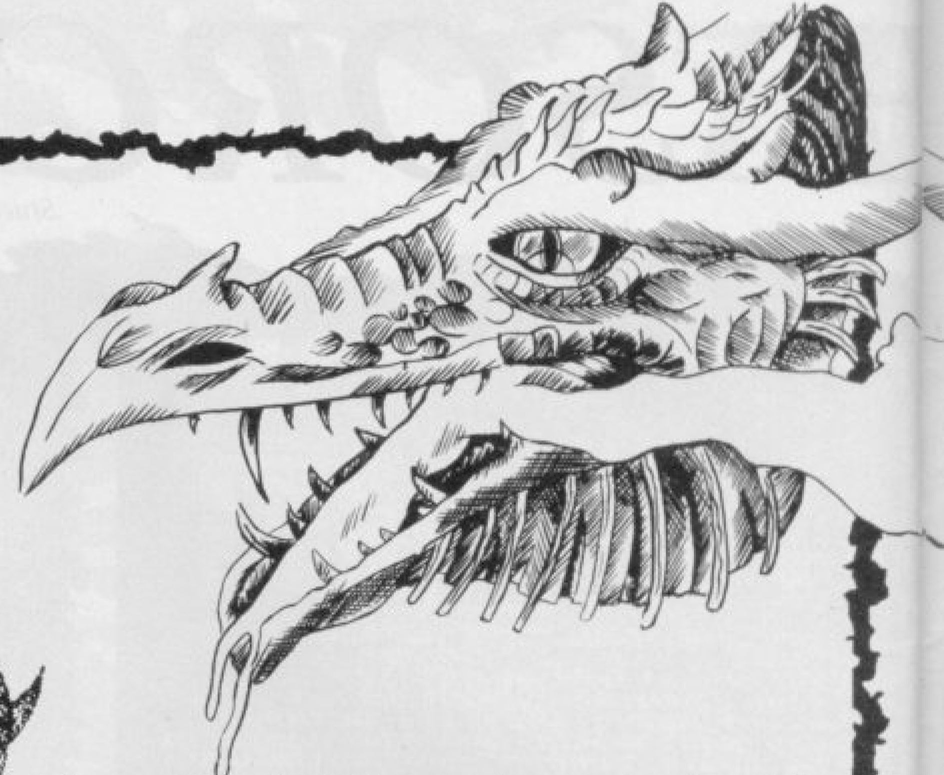
RED DOOR

– Feed Cow to find coin. Make sure you have the Basket and the pipes to catch the snake – she's a real charmer? Tell a Joke to the Sphinx to get the now dead fly. The concubine is looking for two items. Cut Shroud in order to get some bandages.

SKELVULLYN TWINE

– For extra points, try Sniffing the Flowers in Tolan's garden. To pass the hedgehogs, wear the armour and Stroke or Pet them. Say Hello to the shape in the woods. Listen to the Rose for a clue. Try throwing the sickle after you read the notice in the High Street!

Play by Mail





Remember last month we were talking about the differences between Computer Moderated (Conmod) PBM games and Hand Moderated games?

Broadly, the advantages of Conmods are that they can accommodate large numbers of players in a single game at the expense of, sometimes, limiting the actions of the individual players in that the game is run within a rigid set of rules.

Having a huge number of participants, combined with the fact that by definition most of the book-keeping is done by the computer, means that Conmods can make money, sometimes (!), for individuals or companies concerned.

With hand moderated games, however, the game is controlled completely by another human being (sometimes with micro assistance). This, in the best instances, means that the player has the maximum flexibility open to him or her – and doesn't have to simply write a few codes and numbers down as orders . . . they can be detailed and imaginative.

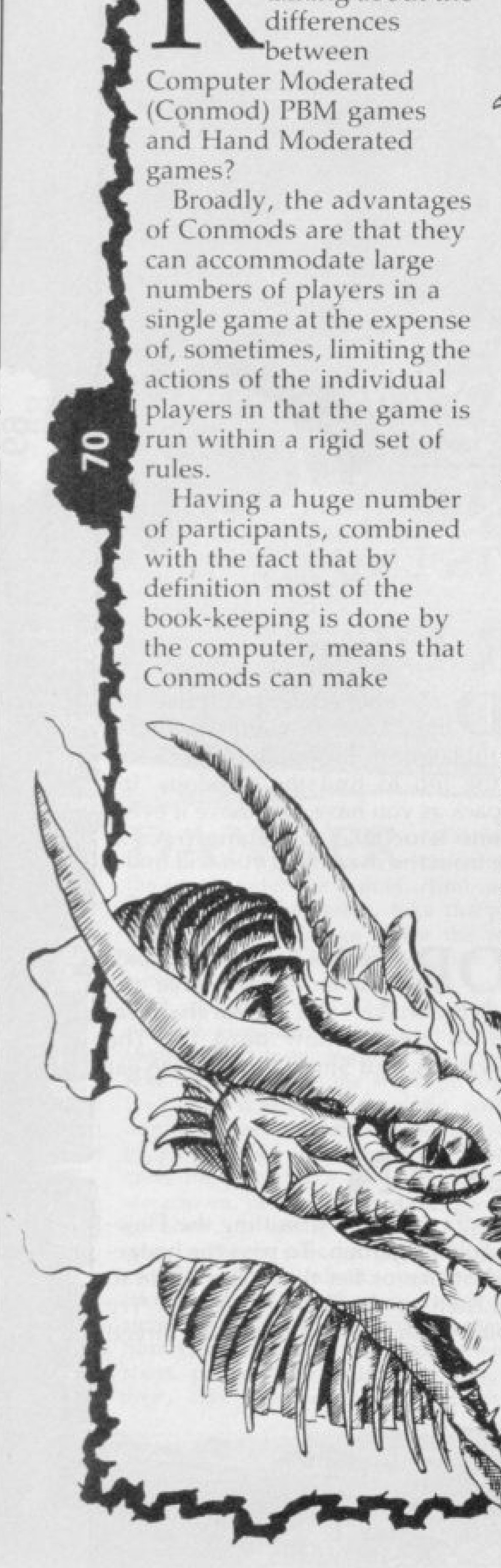
However, the care and imagination that is needed to adjudicate orders like this, and reply in an atmospheric and enjoyable way, is rare. What's more it takes time . . . that means Handmods are often comparatively expensive and still don't make the organisers a profit!

In my opinion a good handmod game can bring more pleasure and excitement than the average conmod, and allows huge scope for true role-playing. It was with great pleasure then that I received a communication from **Tertium Games** – a set up run by Stephen Casey and Martin Westhead.

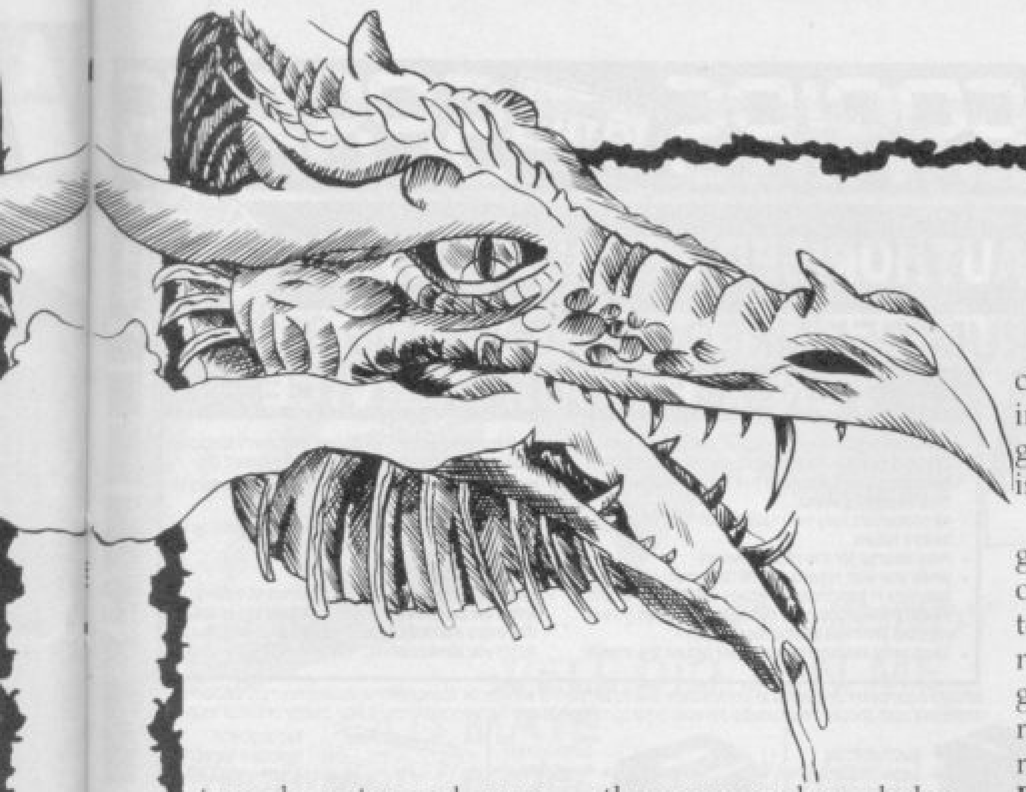
I had heard rumours that they were running a superb role-playing handmod called **Calvana** – and I wasn't disappointed with what they sent me. I can safely say that **Calvana** is the most detailed, best presented, best illustrated, well thought out, alternative universe that I have ever come across. It is, in other words, superb.

The start-up for **Calvana** will cost a cool £7.50 (not even the price of a full-price game) and you'd be unlikely to be disappointed when it solidly thumps onto the hall floor of a morning.

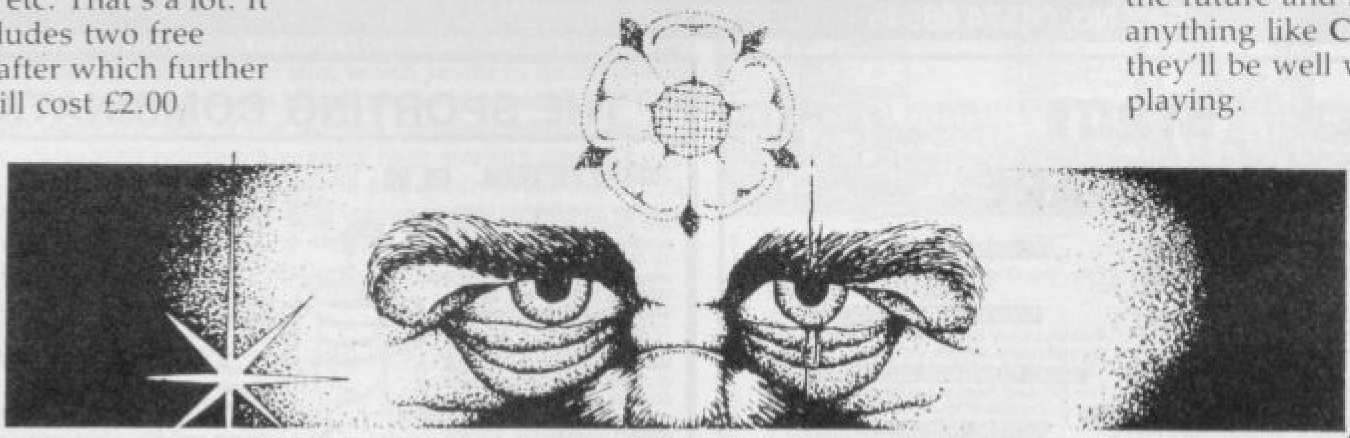
A fully illustrated 50 page A4 sourcebook, with all the background information on the world Earsha that the Holy Province of Calvana forms a small part. More of this later. A beautifully drawn province map, together with a detailed map of the parish of Ne'ranthis (the capital city of the province) in which your character initially lives. A parish guide describing the major places and personalities of that parish. A Character Creation Sheet to help you design your character, a Character Supplement to enhance your character – give him/her depth and







true character and carve out a social niche for them in the game. A Character Sheet detailing the variable information for the character. Finally, a sheet setting out the Earshan year together with the 314 major saints of the Empire and a Questionnaire through which you can set out your character's internal workings and long term desires, etc. That's a lot. It also includes two free turns – after which further turns will cost £2.00



From the above, you might note that **Calvana** is role-playing of a kind you might not be used to. For a start, you are presented with very rudimentary stats, outlining the physical attributes of the player only. What? No intelligence? Charisma? Absolutely not – these are attributes that can only be played out by the individual.

Likewise, Tertium provide a Sourcebook rather than a Rulebook. Rules? There are none – except that you have to live within the society of Calvana and the Sourcebook describes all the common knowledge that would be available to the common man. To call it detailed is almost an insult. What it describes is a alternative society/ world/universe within which your character lives.

You have to invent a character to live, exist and thrive within that world – be it among the laity or within the four parts of the Holy Church of Rishennan, the controlling force of the society.

The Sourcebook's contents are wide ranging encompassing the Geography, Nature, History, Religion and Society of the world, as well as a guide to playing the game.

Briefly described Calvana is a highly organised society, with the Church of Rishennan at its centre. The Church controls, via its four arms: policing, learning, as well as religious matters. Deviance from the prescribed paths are frowned upon with corporal punishment, imprisonment or exile and grassing to the Inquisition is a popular hobby.

There are also plenty of guilds, secret organisations, etc in which to practise intrigue and nastiness – in this way I guess **Calvana** bears some resemblance to that fab role-playing game **Paranoia.**

Weapons are heavily restricted, morality strict, magic rumoured, but unheard of publicly and compulsory euthanasia practised at 53! Who said things were bad after 10 years of Thatch?!!

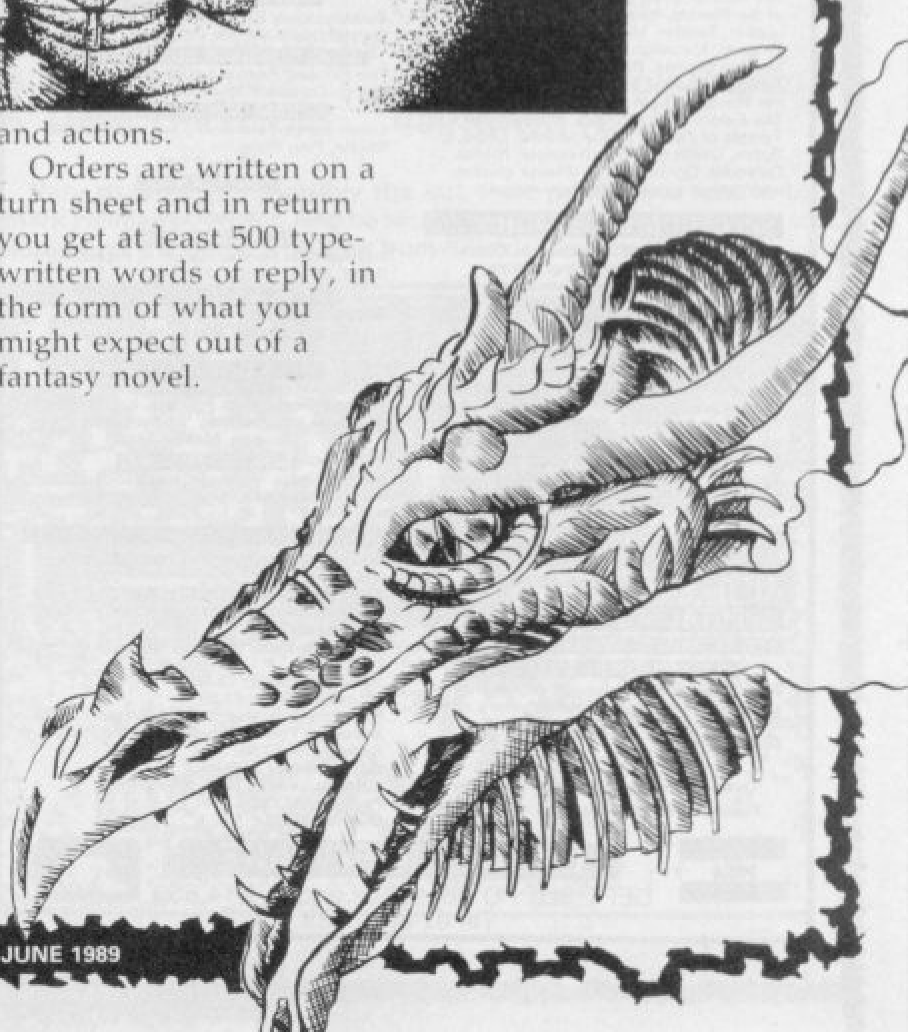
Most of all, Tertium have created a real and believable alternative world in which you create your own character, goals and actions.

Orders are written on a turn sheet and in return you get at least 500 type-written words of reply, in the form of what you might expect out of a fantasy novel.

In many ways, this type of game is like being the central character within a novel – with the advantage that the action is completely interactive. Deadlines are dependent on you, except when you are working in concert with other player-characters.

Now the bad news – there aren't any places in the game at the moment. But if you write to Tertium at 81 Coldyhill Lane, Scarborough, N Yorks YO12 6SE, they will put you on the waiting list for a new game – and in fact might even be tempted to expand the operation to accommodate you.

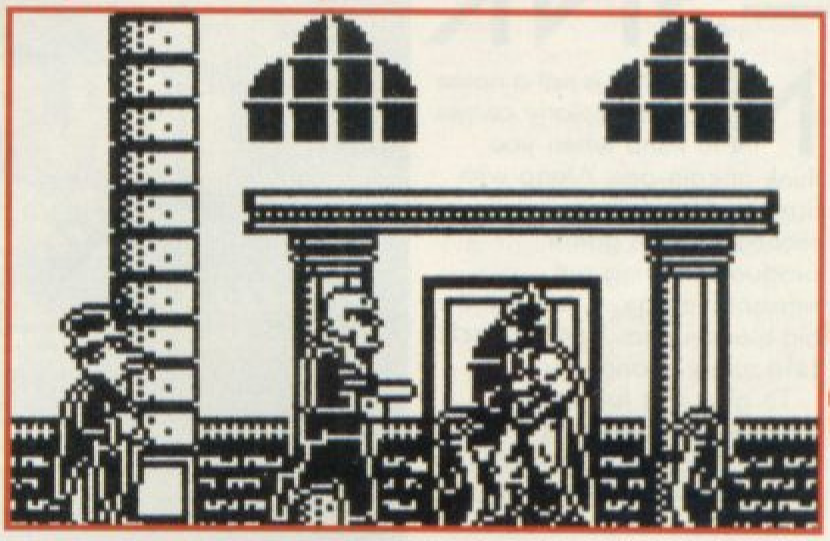
Tertium is also in the process of developing a number of PBM games for the future and if they are anything like **Calvana,** they'll be well worth playing.



ZAPCHAT

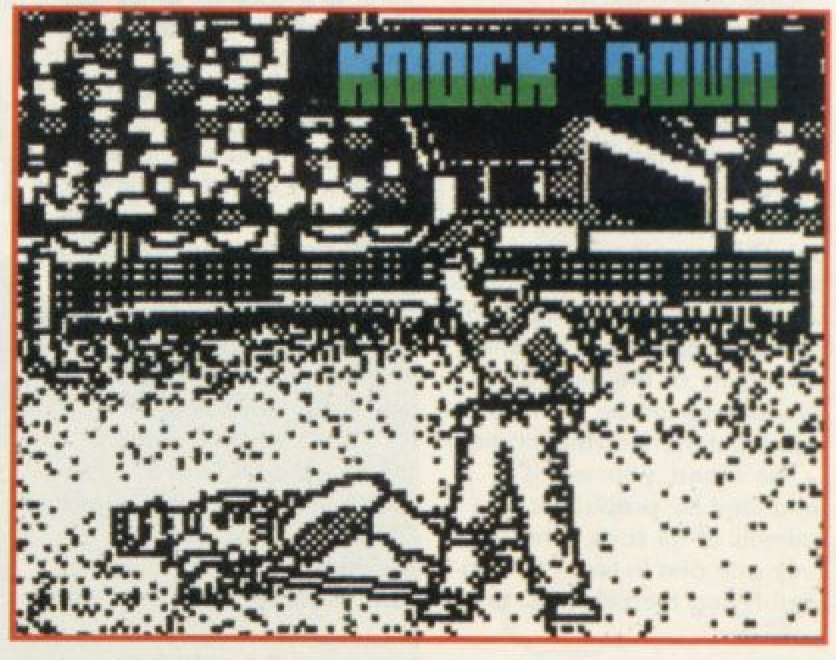
EXTREMELY NOSTALGIC BIG FIVE (BLUB!) *Man singing 'I'll make it through the rain': Jon 'Nostril quivering' Riglar*

Life's an almighty bum is it viewers? One minute you're slapping people round the head shouting 'How's the wife?' and the next (woosh) minute you're either stuck at home doing the dreaded revision (don't worry, I won't mention THAT word again!) or picking up bits of your battered bike after some complete drongo hit it with his 'wheels' and then had the cheek to leave a note saying 'Sorry!' Well, brace yourself for more sad news. This may be the very very last big five to be printed in *Zapchat*. It's enough to make your nostrils quiver isn't it? Well, do something about it! If you want the feature to stay in the colomn send in thousands and thousands of big faves all addressed to 'I'll-make-it-through-the-rain-so-long-as-I've-got-my-big-five-printed-and-my-red-wellies-on!', Sinclair User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Pronto!

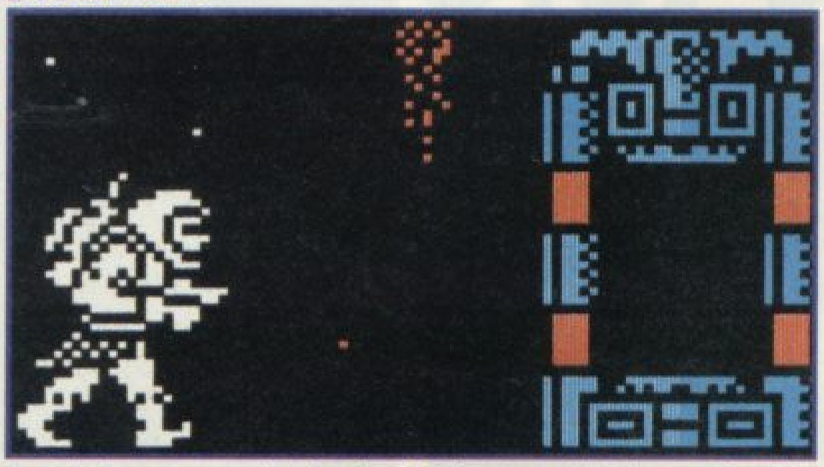


1	HUMAN KILLING MACHINE	US Gold
2	BATMAN 2	Ocean
3	OPERATION WOLF	Ocean
4	LAST NINJA 2	Thingybob, you know
5	DEACON BLUE	Raintown (Eh?)

Very strange. This, possibly the last chart (blub!) was sent in by Mark Hillman of Bristol. And he reckons that the worst game ever to appear on the globe is *R-Type* from Electric Dreams. (Blub!)



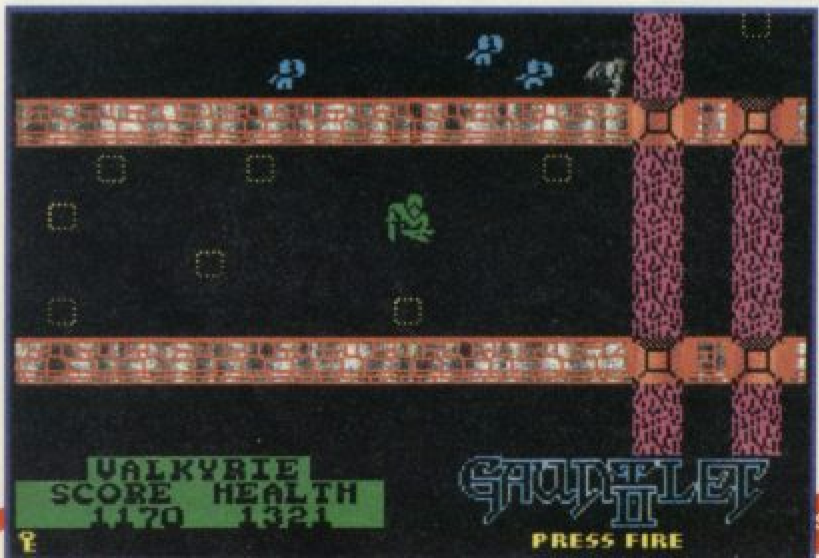
YES I RUDDY WELL DID JON ME OLD MATE *Regiment Leader: Col Bugle Swaffers*



This the very very last batch of high scores which have arrived by the mystic Royal Mail post service, which seems to be behaving itself of late. So, all the peeps below can rattle their bicycle clips with joy and leave the rest of the punters seething with jealousy 'cause their scores ain't printed! Scores for next month's *Zapchat* will be lovingly received by the mystic postie and given a nice warm cup of soup before being passed on to SU where we're so lovely to the little things that you'll probably be sick if I carry on. So I won't. (Thank gawd for small mercies – Ed).

EXOLON	999,640	Martyn Dolphin
OUT RUN	175,700,400	Martyn Dolphin
GAUNTLET 2	996,280	Will Downing
DRILLER	3,181,160	Will Downing
EXOLON	785,500	Geoff Miles
ROBOCOP	118,140	Lee Clutterbuck
1943	2,145,560	Lee Clutterbuck
AFTERBURNER	36,222,130	Gary Higgins
BATMAN (2)	Completed	Gary Higgins
BATMAN (2)	Completed	Mike Osborne

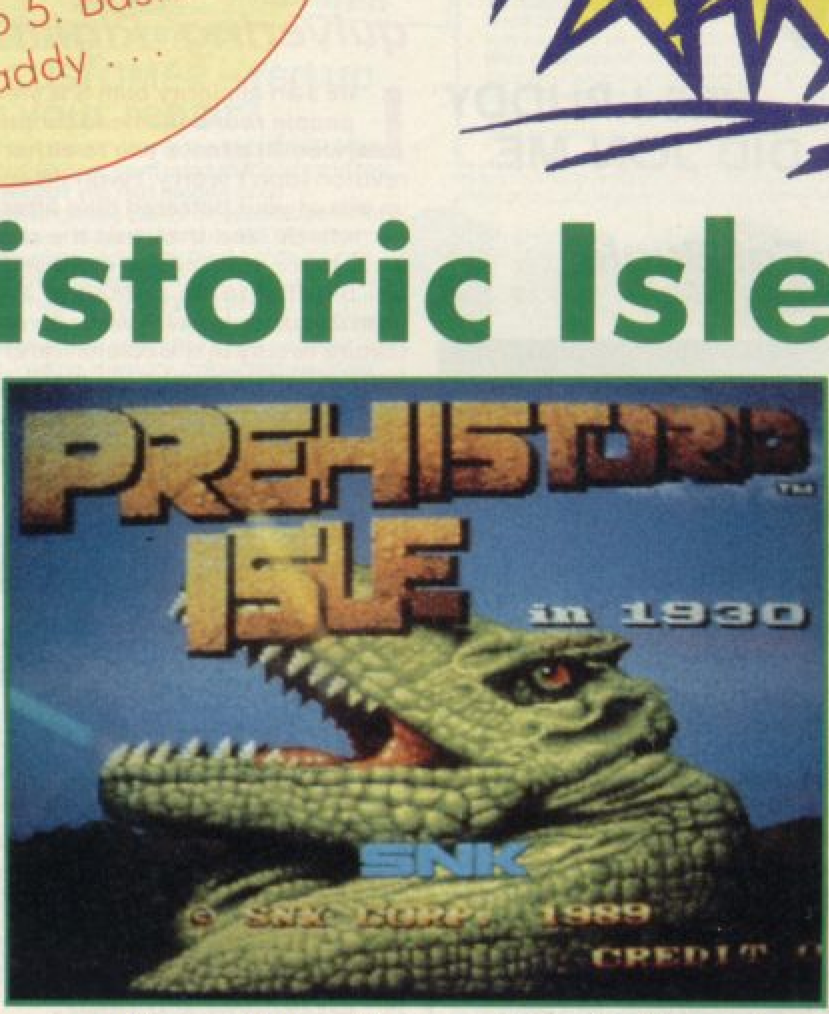
Fin!



The nationwide 10p shortage continues as we test our trigger fingers to destruction in the cause of truth, justice and finding out for the faithful readers of SU, which coin-ops to avoid, which to play and which to sauté lightly, then finish off in the oven at Regulo 5. Baste on, daddy . . .

COIN

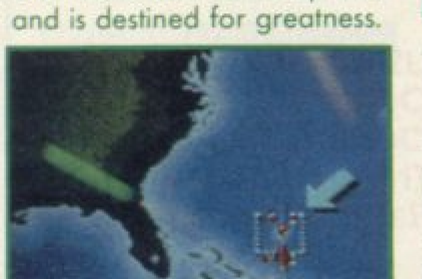
Prehistoric Isle —SNK





Now, SNK is not a name that particularly comes to mind when you think of coin-ops. Along with firms such as Jaleco, it is a second division game producer, turning out reasonable games, but not the big blockbusters. **Prehistoric Isle** might change that.

To give it its full name, **Prehistoric Isle in 1930,** this is a shoot 'em up that is certainly the best game that SNK have ever come up with and is destined for greatness.



One or two player simultaneous, you fly a biplane along the predominantly right to left scrolling landscape of Greenhell Isle – based out slap bang in the middle of the mysterious Bermuda Triangle.

"What???!!," I hear you cry out. "Not another horizontal scrolling shooter?" Yes – 'fraid so, but the humour and detail of the graphics and the sheer playability of the thing lift it way above almost every other game out there at the moment.

The island, you see, is inhabited by prehistoric animals of all sorts, who have only one aim in life – to zap you! Flying Pterodactyls, bright green and brown, flap straight for you with no mercy!

Crusty Iguanadons leap up from the ground and try to claw you – as do the Neanderthal men, walking along dragging their knuckles on the ground – just like Tony Dillon does!

Thye start getting smarter later in the game (unlike Tony Dillon) when they hitch rides on huge mutated bats.

While all this mayhem is going on (and you are zooming around, shooting your way out of it) there are power-up to collect – three sorts. Extra speed, extra points and extra fire-power. The latter gives you a pod that you can rotate around your ship. At the front – 3 o'clock – it will give you extra zap. At 12 and 6 o'clock it will fire sheets of flame up or down. In other positions it will chuck bombs or shoot globs of plasma.

Sound good so far? Well, add massively colourful and smooth scrolling fore and backgrounds, amazing sound effects and huge end of level dinosaurs to zap – like the Brachiosaurus (a full 116 feet long). Phew! I get excited just listing the features . . . imagine what happens when I play the game. Blagh . . . second thoughts, don't imagine what happens when I play the game.

FAXBOX

Prehistoric Isle
The most original, colourful, playable shooter for ages. Play it!
Graphics 9
Sound 9
Addictiveness 9
Gameplay 10
OVERALL RATING
10



74

Crack Down

Sega



You might know that Sega has recently introduced a game system called System 24. This is a board packed full of chips and an operating system which can do almost everything except the ironing. The most important thing about it, however, is that the actual game code and data is loaded from disc.

This is quite a breakthrough for arcade operators, because it means if they want to change a game, instead of having to buy a whole new PCB (printed circuit board), which can cost up to £700-800, they just have to buy data discs (plus a security chip).

It also allows Sega to be a little more adventurous with the style of games they produce on this system – as if a particular game bombs out, they won't be left with half a ton of useless hardware on their hands, only a few discs.

The first couple of games on the system haven't exactly been superb, however. There's been **Scramble Spirits** – a fairly unremarkable vertical scroller and **Gain Ground** – an odd vertical scroll fantasy combat game. The newest, and you'll be glad to know, the best is called **Crack Down.**

Crack Down? Those Japanese sure know how to think of snappy titles, don't they? The scam here is that some mad scientist (probably an Experimental Biochemical Geneticist I expect) has been trying to produce artificial humanoids. He's succeeded too, and you (or you plus a friend) have got to go in and destroy that many-levelled complex in which he and his creations are hiding.

Trouble is, they are smart and they've all got guns . . . and the complex itself is littered with traps. You yourself are armed with two different sorts of gun, but very limited ammunition – you just have to pick up more as you go along.

The screen is split up into three zones. The top third across the whole of the screen is a view of the whole of the level, showing the layout, location of enemies and red crosses, upon which you must stop and plant time bombs. This display is very detailed, with all figures on it animated. Nice.

The bottom bit is split into two down the middle of the screen, showing your character and the immediate surroundings in a **Gauntlet**-type plan view. The graphics on this display look very stylish indeed.

If you are playing the two player game, the two of you can roam aorund the maze (for that is what each level effectively is) completely independently – each window scrolls perfectly separately from the other.

The nasties are roaming around the place looking mean, and if you kill 'em, more are generated – so it's best not to stick around. In cases of extreme danger, however, the old smart bomb can take out everything on the screen.

All this activity is played against the background of your time bombs counting down. You have about two minutes to plant them all . . . otherwise they'll go off with you still in the proximity – not the most healthy thing to do.

Reminiscent of both **Gauntlet** and **Zybots, Crack Down** is easy to pick up and playable – particularly in the two player mode. Fun sound too – grab a friend and give it a try.

FAXBOX

Crack Down
Gauntlet meets Zybots meets some good graphics in the best Sega System 24 game to date

Graphics 9
Sound 7
Addictiveness 7
Gameplay 8

OVERALL RATING **8**



Battle Rangers

– Data East

Women in distress are generally out. Hostages are in . . . have you noticed? How many games can you think of where the bad guys have taken hostages and you have to go in there and do the business? Loads.

Battle Rangers is no exception – one or two of you have to blam away at assorted uniformed opposition with the object, at the very end, to free the President. Just as well the SAS in reality are more successful than the average kid playing a vid!

This is a game in the old **Ikari Warriors** mould, with a few variations – you can enter houses, jump over stuff – and at the end of each level there's a big thing to take out.

Not too much to it, but there is a hilarious bit near the end of the first level. You encounter a baddie in a room who says something like, "Take you the red hot bullets of the shotgun to death."

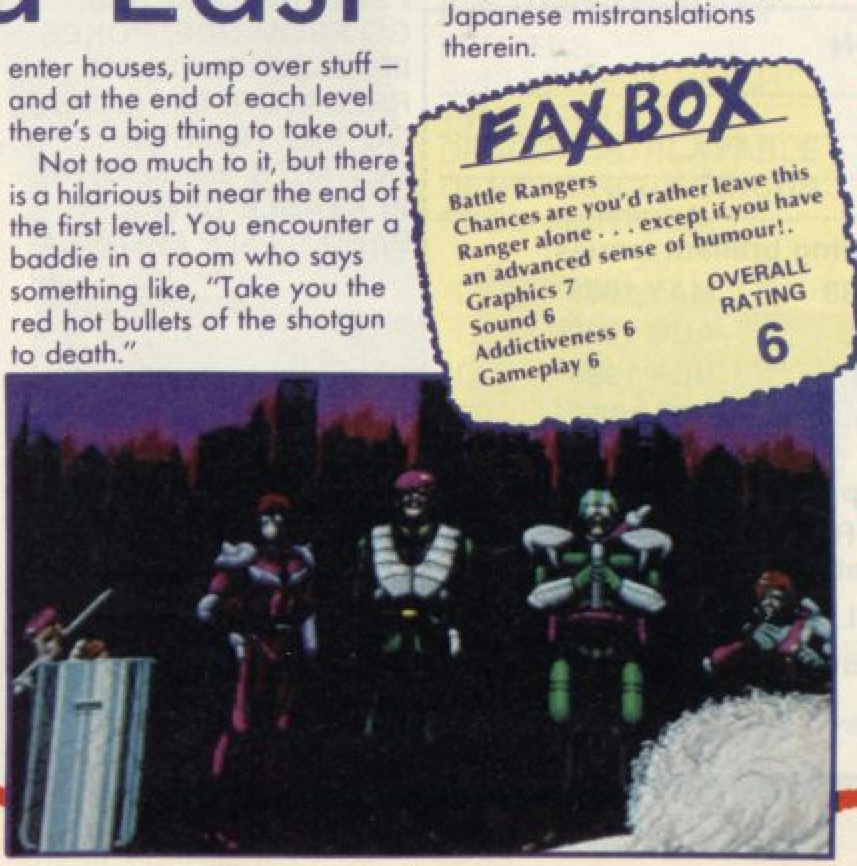
This had me creased up – and I shall be playing it more, if only to find the other linguistic Japanese mistranslations therein.

FAXBOX

Battle Rangers
Chances are you'd rather leave this Ranger alone . . . except if you have an advanced sense of humour!.

Graphics 7
Sound 6
Addictiveness 6
Gameplay 6

OVERALL RATING **6**



FAB SU OFFER

IT'S unbelievable! Sinclair User is offering, for a very limited period, back issues of Sinclair User for the period March 1988 to March 1989 for an incredible price of £1.15 (normal back issue price £2.00!) including postage and packing. If your collection is missing some megatapes this is your chance to fill in those missing gaps at a never-to-be-repeated price.

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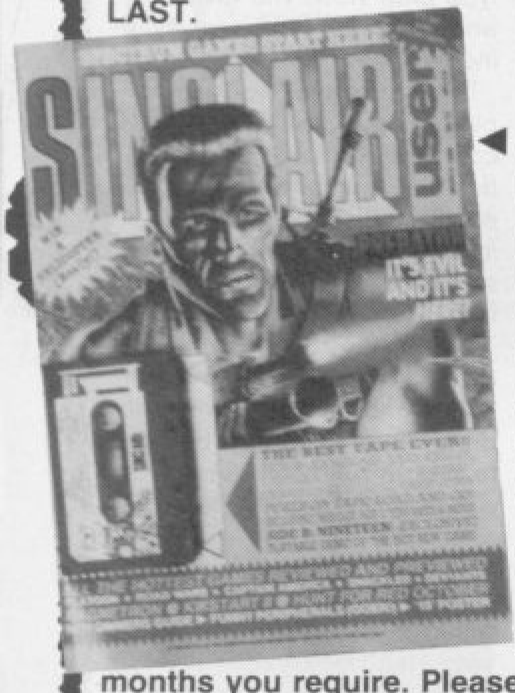
Now people usually run back issue pages to clear away vast piles of dodgy old issues nobody else wants.

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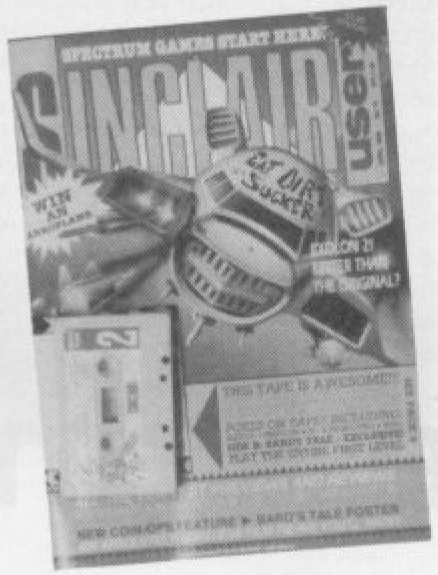
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MAY 1988 MEGATAPE THREE FEATURED: DAN DARE II SPECIAL GAME. **PLUS 100 POKES. PLAYABLE DEMO:** STREET FIGHTER **FROM US GOLD** ▼





JUNE 1988 MEGATAPE FOUR FEATURED: HYPERACTIVE **FROM SPECIAL FX. 20 POKES INCLUDE:** KARNOV, ENERGY WARRIOR, DAN DARE II, FRIGHTMARE, GHOSTBUSTERS, BUGGY BOY, MAGNETRON, GOTHIK, XARAX, **ETC. PLAYABLE DEMO:** SKATE CRAZY **FROM GREMLIN** ◀



JULY 1988 ▲
MEGATAPE FIVE
FEATURED: BRATATTACK **FROM PLAYERS. POKES INCLUDED:** VIXEN, HYPERACTIVE, 1999, ACTION FORCE II, GUTZ, EARTHLIGHT, METAL ARMY **AND MORE! PLAYABLE DEMO:** HOTSHOT **FROM PRISM**



AUGUST 1988 ▲
MEGATAPE SIX
INCLUDED: ASTRO CLONE **FROM HEWSON. POKES INCLUDED:** BEYOND THE ICE PALACE, FOOTBALL MANAGER II, BRAT ATTACK, GRYZOR, FURY. **PLAYABLE DEMOS OF:** VIRUS, BARBARIAN II **AND** MOTORBIKE MADNESS.

SEPTEMBER 1988
MEGATAPE SEVEN
FEATURED: AMAUROTE **FROM MASTERTRONIC. POKES INCLUDED:** MARAUDER, BARBARIAN, ASTRO CLONE, MICKEY MOUSE, OCTAN, OVERKILL, STUNT BIKE SIMULATOR **AND MORE. PLAYABLE DEMO:** DALEY'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE **PLUS FREE FOX BADGE!** ▼



OCTOBER 1988
MEGATAPE EIGHT
FEATURED: DEVIANTS **FROM PLAYERS. POKES INCLUDED:** THE DARK SIDE, VIRUS, EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, DEVIANTS, 19 – PART ONE. **PLAYABLE DEMO:** TYPHOON. ▼



NOVEMBER 1988
MEGATAPE NINE
FEATURED BEAR A GRUDGE **ORIGINAL GAME. GIANT** OP WOLF **POSTER. PLAYABLE DEMO:** OPERATION WOLF!!!!
◄

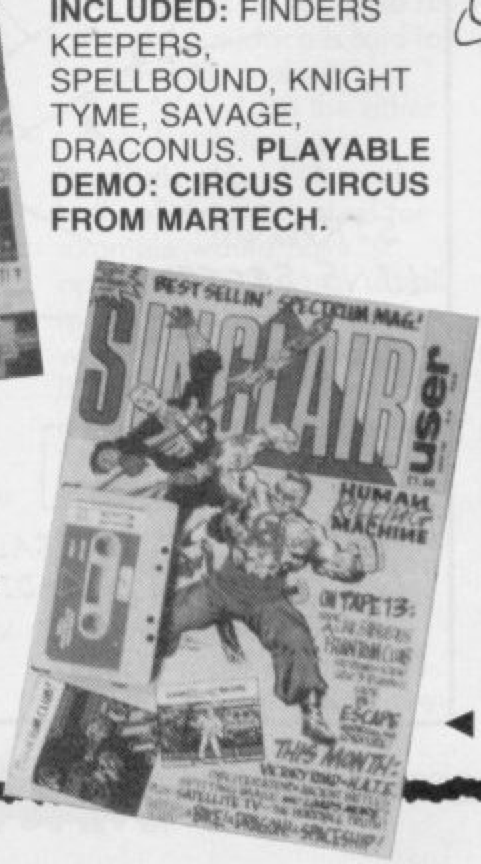




DECEMBER 1988 ▲
MEGATAPE TEN
FEATURED: THREE COMPLETE GAMES! FINDERS KEEPERS/ SPELLBOUND KNIGHT TYME. **PLAYABLE DEMO:** TECHNO COP **AND COMPO ON TAPE!**

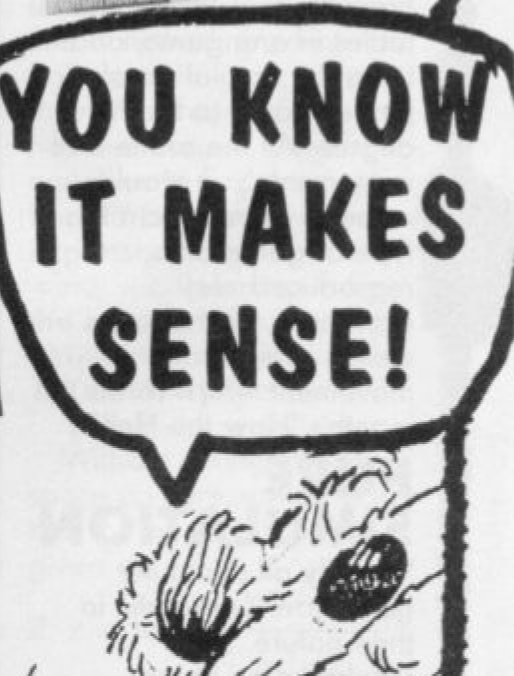


JANUARY 1989 ▲
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FEBRUARY 1988
MEGATAPE TWELVE
FEATURED: BLOBOCOP **FROM PLAYERS FANTASTIC ORIGINAL GAME! PLAYABLE DEMO:** XENON **FROM MELBOURNE HOUSE (PLUS** SAM COUPE **DETAILS)** ▼





MARCH 1989
MEGATAPE THIRTEEN
INCLUDED: 2 COMPLETE GAMES PHANTOM CLUB **FROM OCEAN (FAB ARCADE ACTION)** ESCAPE **FROM TARTAN SOFTWARE (OUR FIRST**
◄ **ADVENTURE!)**

...HOW T

ASCII code nightmres
disassemblers? Baffledy
problems with programmng
or not, Andrew Hewsoni yo
and he'll be investigatinghe
say "Ram Dos Buffer Iter

... DID WE DESIGN A PINBALL GAME?

Timescanner, the new coin-op conversion by Activision, is virtually completed, and was previewed in SU a couple of months back. It is basically four large pinball tables in one game, and it takes the simulation of a pinball game to the n'th degree. All the subtle ball movements you would come to expect from this type of game are reproduced very accurately, and it is the design of the ball movement which forms this month's 'How the Hell?'

PURE SIMULATION

Virtually all computer games are unrealistic in their nature. Flight simulators on home computers only really skim the surface when it comes to realism, so it was nice to have a 100% simulation problem in the shape of **Timescanner.** The first impression when thinking how to make a ball move around curvy shaped walls and obstacles with only a couple of flippers to control was – "easy peasy, give us the graphics and we'll have this job done in no time!" However, after staring at the wall for several hours pondering how to get all those subtle bounces and ricochets that full size pinball machines achieve, the problem seemed to get more and more complex. Just think about it for a moment – a real pinball is approximately one inch in diameter and there are an almost infinite number of collision points around the periphery of the ball, let alone all the walls. Each collision will produce an infinite number of reactions on the ball, and basically any program which fails to produce the look of the real thing will ruin the 'feel' of the game.

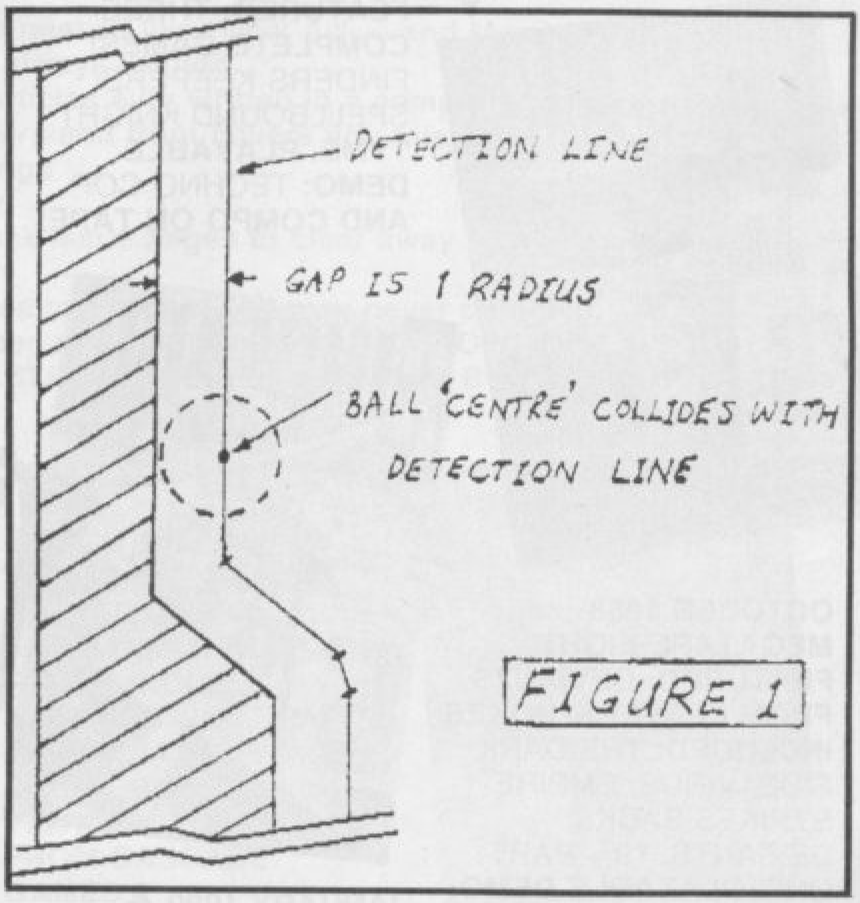


FIGURE 1

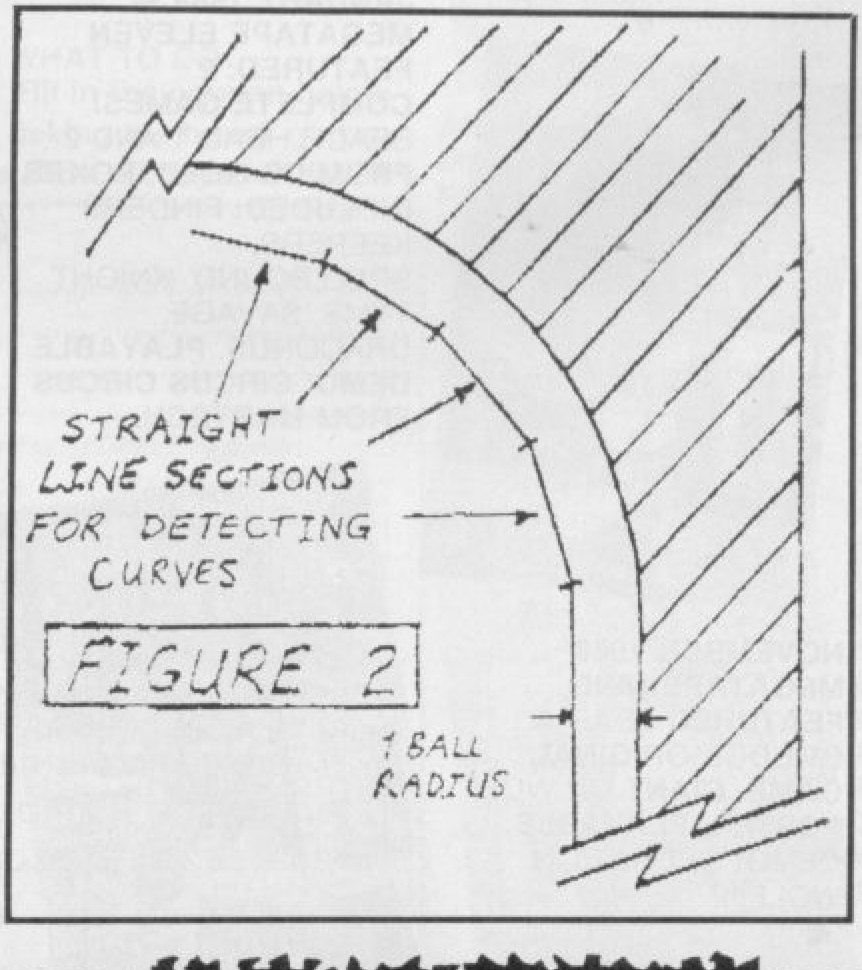


FIGURE 2

The major headache was how to model the ball. The coin-op screen has a normal TV screen but is turned through 90 degrees and the ball is about 16 pixels in diameter. In converting the game to the Spectrum, we have to design the game with the TV screen in its normal orientation as some parents might get a little miffed if their offspring start to tip the new 80 inch stereo/satellite TV on its side to play **Timescanner.** As a result of this, the playing area does not fill the screen and our pinball is only 7 pixels in diameter when keeping everything else to scale. A ball of this size has only 16 pixels around its periphery and even if we based out detection system around the collisions between the peripheral pixels of the ball and external wall pixels it wouldn't give anywhere near the kind of ball control required.

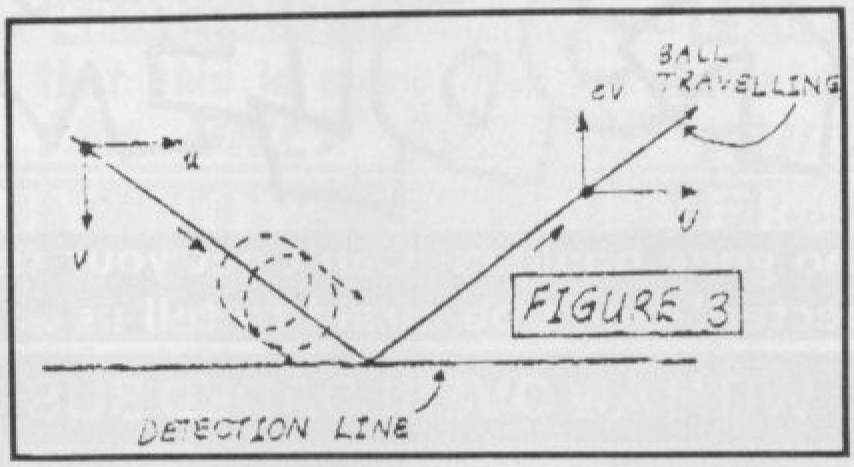
THE HELL!!

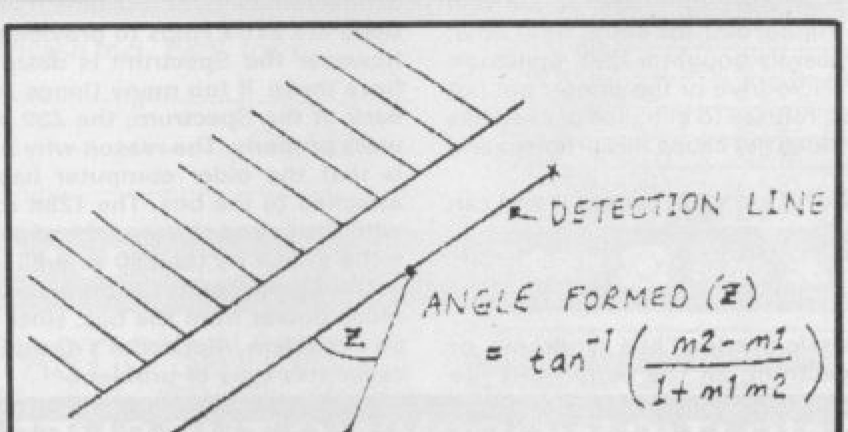
htmares? Disillusioned with
fled by bytes? If you're having
amming, whether they alliterate
son is your man. Drop him a line
ating the problem before you can
fer Interface Edge Connector"

NEWTON AND HIS MERRY MEN!

As with any problem, once the penny drops and a solution is found, you kick yourself for not thinking of it earlier. This was the case with the solution of this problem. While studying applied maths books for the equations needed for restitution (posh word eh!) and momentum, it occurred to us that old Newton and his merry men drew lots of examples of applied mathematics by using particles to show reflection angles and such like; especially when tracing rays of light. The key to the pinball simulatioon was to model the ball on a particle – as an object without size, but with a position in space. A ball is effectively a one inch diameter particle – good job atoms aren't that big! Obviously the centre of the ball is the co-ordinate of our 'particle', and if we can offset the detection of the particle to the walls by the radius of the ball then things should start to work. Look at Fig 1 to grasp the concept. It shows part of a wall with a line representing the detection line for the centre of the ball. All the visible walls of the game have a detection line displaced from them by one ball radius in size.

The detection system therefore is based upon a large number of straight lines which the centre of the ball collides with. Even the detection lines around curved walls can be made up of straight lines and produce a reasonably accurate representation of a curve fig 2.





ANGLE BETWEEN TWO LINES

To get a realistic impression of ball speed we base the ball's movement around an X/Y velocity system (discussed in this column a few months back). Figure 3 shows the rebound angles for a basic collision. The ball has two components of velocity – 'v' and 'u'. 'v' is the velocity component 'normal' to the line and 'u' is the velocity component parallel to the line. After colliding with the line, the ball's new velocities are 'ev' and 'u'. Basically, the variable 'e' is the elasticity of the surface ie. 'e' can vary from 0 to 1. When 'e' = 0, there is no rebound at all and the surface is said to be 'perfectly inelastic'. When 'e' = 1 on the other hand, the surface is 'perfectly elastic'. A steel ball colliding with steel for example would have 'e' approaching 1 while a ball made out of polystyrene would have a low elasticity. It may seem that I have jumped on very quickly from a ball detection system to the way the rebound angles are computed. This falls into place like so.

The ball, remember, is now modelled around a particle in our co-ordinate system. To work out where the ball is going to travel we simply translate the ball's start position and end position (after moving) into an equation for a line passing through those two points. The line equation is of the form:

$y = mx + c$

as are the lines that form the detection for the walls and obstacles. Obviously there are hundreds of lines in a typical pin table and the major part of the programming exercise is to search quickly through each line until the line which the ball centre is going to pass through is found. Once that has been found, there is an equation to find the angle formed between two lines expressed in the form of $y = mx + c$. Referring to fig 4, the equations for the angle between two lines is:

1 Line A – $y = m1x + c$
Line B – $y = m2x + c$

Without taking lots of space up here, suffice to say that the angle 'z' in fig 5 is given by:

2 $z = \tan^{-1} \frac{m2 - m1}{1 + m1m2}$

This angle information provides the routine with enough information to produce new velocities after the collision and the correct angle of rebound. My apologies if the way it works still sounds complicated to understand, but obviously a whole magazine could be filled with the technical details of such a system. Hopefully the programmers reading this can interpret the information and we may see more games based around this type of simulation. Play the game when it comes out shortly and judge it for yourself.

I'VE GOT THIS PROBLEM

Gizmo gone bonkers? Can't get your thingy connected? Don't be afraid to tell us . . .

. . WITH AN OVERLOADED BUS

Dear Dr Rupe, I've had a 48K Spectrum, Microdrive and Sinclair 2040 (a rebadged Alphacom) for some time now, and they've all worked well. I recently bought a 128K Spectrum and this works with either the Microdrive or the printer but not both together – if I try, it crashes, refuses to initialise or switches to 48K mode. My old ZX printer does not cause this problem and works fine.

Is this a known incompatibility? If so, what causes it and can anything be done about it?

David Acton
Northwich
Cheshire

● What we have here is the classic overload bus syndrome, or COBS. No, it's true. In the Spectrum, all the peripherals are connected, more or less directly to the Z80 chip itself. Normally, there are extra chips to provide more power than the Z80 can, however the Spectrum is designed to be cheap and doesn't have these. If too many things are plugged into the bus at the back of the Spectrum, the Z80 becomes overloaded and can't work properly. The reason why it all worked on a 48K Spectrum is that the older computer has much less internal circuitry attached to the bus. The 128K models have extra bits to cope with the sound chip and the expanded memory, and these have to be driven by the Z80 as well.

The ZX printer has a low-power circuit that doesn't take very much power from the bus, since Sinclair knew that this would be a problem. Alphacom's design is more conventional, and can cause this type of problem.

. . . AND IT'S WORRYING THE SHEEP

Dear Dupe (now then, let's start again . . . RG), What the heck is a multiface? Up in the wilds of Norfolk, nobody really seems to know. I've heard it's for copying tape to disk and vice versa. I've got a +3 and I'm interested in what they do, and how.

A Bolton
King's Lynn
Norfolk

● Multifaces are boxes of tricks that have the electronics to stop a Spectrum dead in its tracks, no matter what it's doing. When it's stopped, the Multiface then gets it to run a program. This lets you fiddle around with the computer's memory and load or save chunks of it to tape or disk. This has the effect that you can load a program off tape, let it run and then save it to disk.

There are also add-on-programs, like Genie, that let you decode the instructions in whatever software the Spectrum's running. With practice, you can add infinite lives or cheat modes to programs with a Multiface; it's a classic hacker's tool, even in Norfolk. Contact Romantic Robot on 01-200 8870.

. . . I CAN'T RESIST ASKING ABOUT

Dear Dr Rupe, I have just sent off for a replacement ULA 5C112E-3 for my issue 2 16K Spectrum. However, they've sent me a ULA6C001E-7, which needs some resistor changes. They didn't send any instructions, although they did send some resistors.

What should I change? I've tried plugging in the ULA, but all I get is coloured squares on the screen and the chip gets very hot.

J Levett
Plumstead
London

● The short answer is I don't know. Sinclair sent their service agents details of the modifications needed whenever they updated the ULA design, and there were quite a few of these. However, the people who sent you the new ULA should be able to tell you, and I'd ask them.

A word of warning – you shouldn't try the chip by itself. The resistors set the voltages on some of its pins, and if you don't make the modifications you run the fisk of blowing the chip and the Spectrum sky high.

. . . BUT I'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT IT IS

Dear Dr Rupe, I seem to have lost my memory. Or rather my computer has. Although my +3 has 128K of memory, all of which I need for my program, I can only have around 41K of program and data loaded at once. Where's the extra memory gone?

Marcus Chaplin
Clevedon
Avon

● There's nothing wrong with the computer. At any time, there's only about 48K available for BASIC, and 6K of this is used by the screen, leaving 42K for program and data. The rest of the 128K memory is used by the disk operating system and for the RAMdisk. This is probably what you need to investigate next. You can save about 60K of data in the RAMdisk; if you load it in to the BASIC program only as you need it you can have a much bigger program without running out of memory. See chapter 20 in the manual for more details.

OUTLA

TAKE THIS, FOUR-EYES!

Pretend to be Bruce Willis in these brillo bins. Remember you'll have to pull half of your hair out to be really convincing – £3.99 Beau Baggage. Dayglo orange stringy – 50p Beau Baggage.

Mickey Rourke wears these don'tcha know? We couldn't get him to model so here's Jim 'big chief' Douglas doing a pretty good impression (no he isn't – everyone in the cosmiverse). £3.99 from Beau Baggage – Leather Lane, London EC1.





Be really 'up to date' (we don't think) in these Aceeeiiidy type shades – £2.99 Beau Baggage. Dayglo yellow stringy thing to hang your goggles round your neck 50p Beau Baggage.



Wear these and you will actually become Arnie Schwartzy in the Terminator – £1.99 Beau Baggage.

The sun has got his hat on hip hip hip hooray, the sun has got his hat on and he's coming out to play!!! Yes indeedy folks Summer is ruddy well on it's way and some of you will soon be flopping your bods about in the sun beams of Torremolinos while the rest of us are spending the summer hols with Mum, Dad and Aunty June at Aunty's caravan in Clacton eating curly spam sandwiches saying "ooh no I'm not going outside today it's far too hot!?!

Whether it be 'Phew wot a scorcher' time in Brittyland (like not very often) or 'Phew wot a blimey blink hotty' time abroad you'll not want to be without those summertime essentials sun gerlasses to protect your dainty eyeballs while turning you into a twizzling trendo. Now that's where we come in.

Last month Outlands gave you a peeky at the best titfers (hats to you) to sport on the beach and now in this second stage of SU's guide to summertime fashions we bring you the bestest eye goggles to be seen in this year. So if you don't want to be the only one still wearing shades with Mickey Mouses on the side of them, that your mum bought you when you were six, you best take a gander at a few of our faves!

Wanna look just like Janet Street-Porter? You do? Lordy what a sicko. You can sport these saucy tortoise shell numbers for only £3.99 – Beau Baggage.



KOOSH!

One day last week a strange and weirdy object turned up at EMAP Towers. What could it possibly be? Chris Jenkins thought it was a wibbly sea anemone, Jimbo reckoned it was a little chum for lonely hedgehogs and Sir Terwonee thought it was an intergalactic being from the milky way (what a drongo, eh readers?)

Well that just proves what thickies they are because they were all completely wrong. The creature in question is, in fact, a Koosh (a who? – all SU readers). Yes a Koosh. It's made of stringy coloured elastic in a sort of pom-pom shape, like your sister makes out of wool (?!?) and you can have endless fun with it (if you can believe the press release).

Distributors Matchbox say you can do all of the following with a Koosh: Throw 'em; Catch 'em; Wear 'em (Gawd knows where?) Wiggle 'em; Teach 'em tricks (but don't be surprised if you get very little response); Juggle 'em; Collect 'em; Hug 'em (this one's just for pervs); Volley 'em back and forth . . . sorry I'll have to stop there because I'm getting all hot under the collar and excited just thinking about this – phewee!

In the SU office we actually had much more fun slinging our Koosh against the wall in anger, or pelting visitors with it as they walked through the door, great fun. The Koosh is available at leading toy shops and costs £5, but if you're Mister Speedy you can get one for nought. We have 20 lovely Kooshes to give away, so if you want one you have to answer the following question:

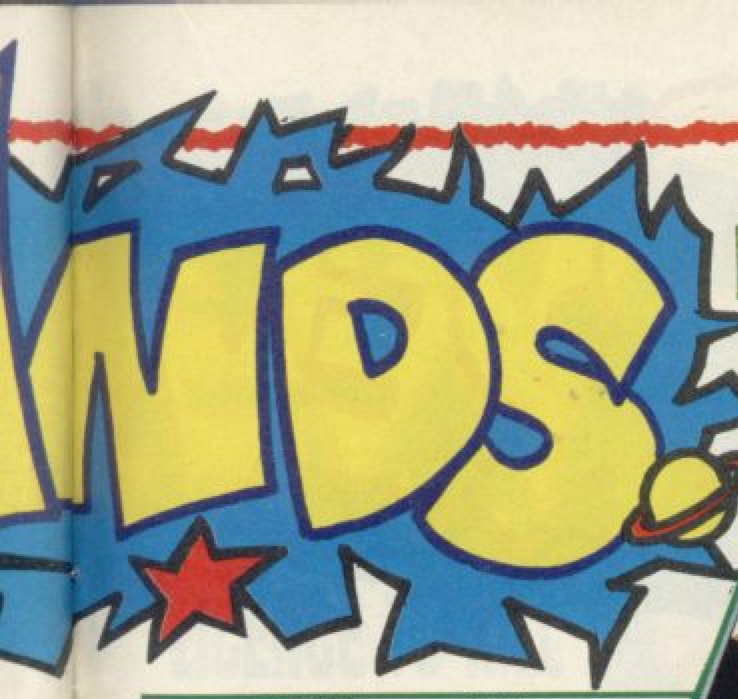
A Koosh is made of:

a) spaghetti

b) plastic

c) elastic

Send your answer to: Ooh goosh I really want a Koosh! Sinclair User, Priory Court, 30-32 Priory Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Closing date May 25th 1989.



IT'S A CHEAP JOKE ...

Aaaaaaaaarrrrgggghh! Wossat? My sides splitting. We've just got through watching a whole section of the funniest things we've ever seen. No. It's not Tony Dillon chatting up bimbos in Stringfellows, it's the latest selection of classic comedy to appear on the Channel 5 video label.

All the sorts of comedy that people used to pay their licence fee to see and the stuff you can't even get on telly these days (fyak). Take a look at the selection of vids here. You're bound to see one that tickles your fancy. Even so, for a mere £10.00 you can always buy a couple and you won't go far wrong.





Just in case you're not feeling very adventurous, we've broken down what sort of stuff you'll find on each tape.

This is a Spinal Tap (cert 15)
Hilarious and perfect Rock'n'Rawl spoof. Only for non-heads or riders at the gates of dawn with a sense of humour.

The Goons (cert U)
Zano-rama! Harry Secombe (tubby religious smile of Highway fame) actually quite wacky in his day, along with comic genius types as Michael Bentine (Pottytime), Spike Milligan (Portable phone ads) and Peter Sellers (Pink Panther etc) indulge in outrageously self indulgent indulgery.





Rising Damp – The Movie (cert PG)
Super sit com laffs with lovely Leonard Rossiter (Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin) plays scheming disgusting landlord called Hoogstraten or something. Lots of other semi-celebs and the brilliant Denholm Elliot appear in the movie of the TV show. Ace.

Attack of the Killer Tomatoes (cert PG)
Cucumbers have invaded New York! Well, alright, they're tomatoes. But no ordinary toms, they're vicious killing beasts and I don't know how funny it is because we haven't seen it.

TECH, AHOY!

Revolution after revolution? After first discovering how to place video signals onto unreliable magnetic tape, and then discovering how to put audio signals on a shiny plastic disc, some clever boffin has come up with a way to put video and stereo audio signals onto a shiny gold coloured plastic disc. The result, CDV.

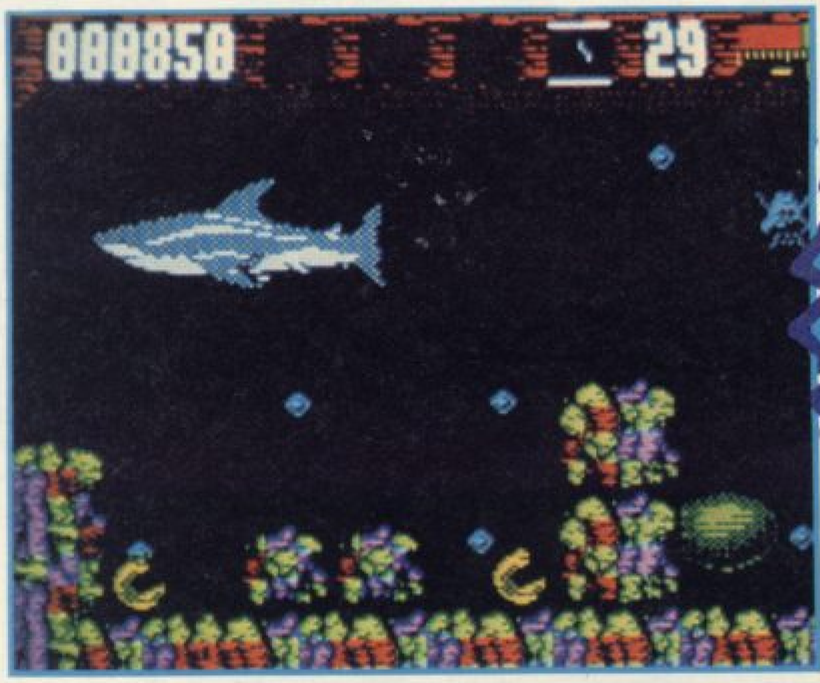
Compact Disc Video lets you enjoy the same sort of crystal clear sound quality the more well off people like me like listening to, along with a picture that doesn't deteriorate in time, like magnetic tape does. It also provides greater accuracy, allowing you to jump to a specific track on a disc, or even a specific second on the track.

The CDV players made by Philips also support the old Laservision discs (silver, not gold), though these fail to create stereo sound. A plus feature with the old Laserdiscs, is that they allow you to access some pretty amazing features. Like adjustable playing speed, forward and reverse, as well as unblurred freeze frame and frame count.

A full size player takes all three sizes of disc (6cm, 20cm and 30cm) (pictured) will set you back £499.99, though Philips are releasing a player sometime this year that only takes 6cm discs, so it only plays CDV singles and regular CDs for £349.99. Is it worth it? At the moment no, due to the small selection of titles, though both EMI and Phonogram are supporting it. Who knows what the future holds?







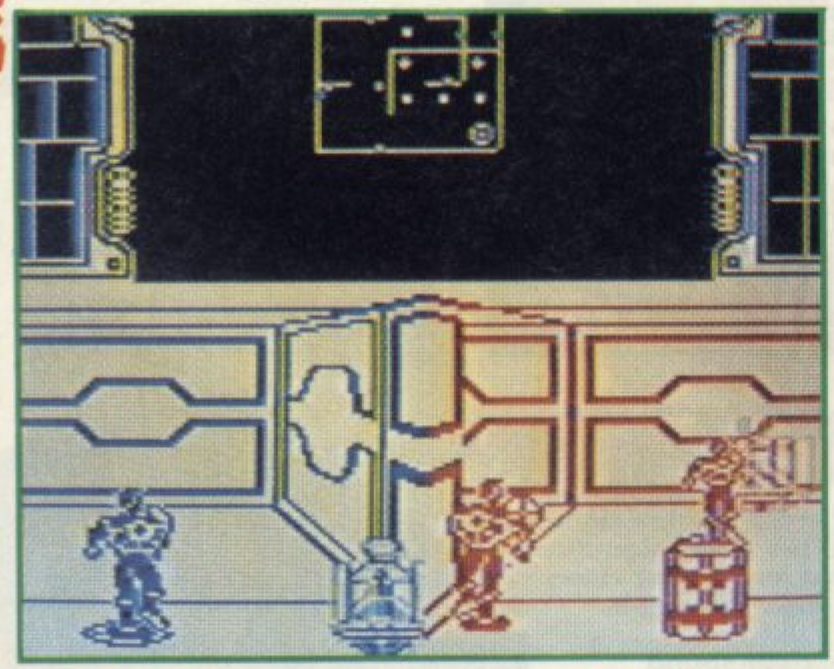


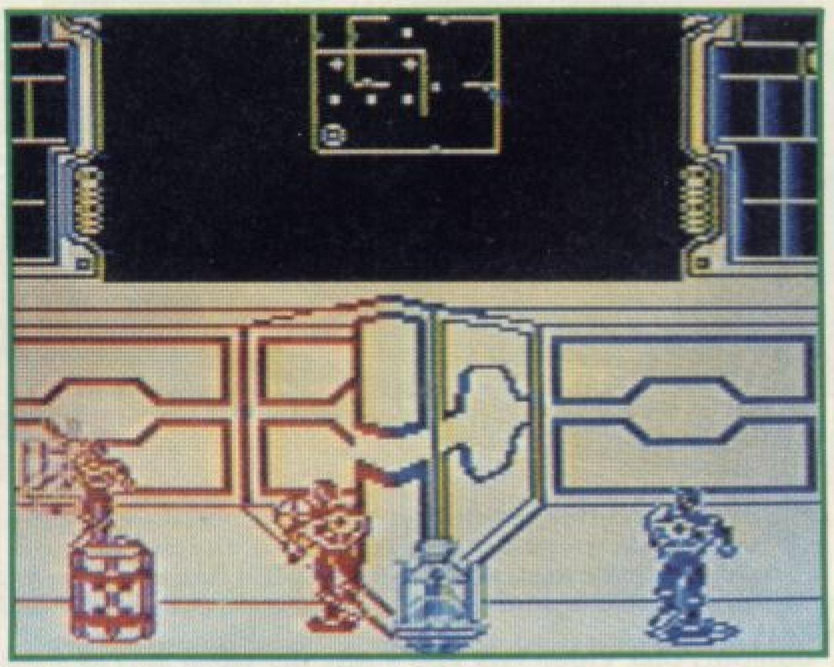
JAWS

Avoid those embarassing oh-dear-where-have-my-legs-gone experiences by buying Jaws, the game of the film of the book of the nasty big fish with gnashy teeth. For those of you too young to remember the impact of the ten-year-old film (and its inevitable sequels *Jaws 2* and *Jaws 3 – 3D*), imagine the sensation of swimming along quite happily when suddenly you're entirely dismembered by a chomping great shark.

Complete with digitised Roy Scheider, the game looks like it sticks to the plot of the film about as well as Hitler stuck to the treaty of Versailles. Still, the shark looks pretty, the underwater scenes look suitably, er, underwatery, and we can't wait to get our hooks into it.

Streetdate: June.
Price: £8.95





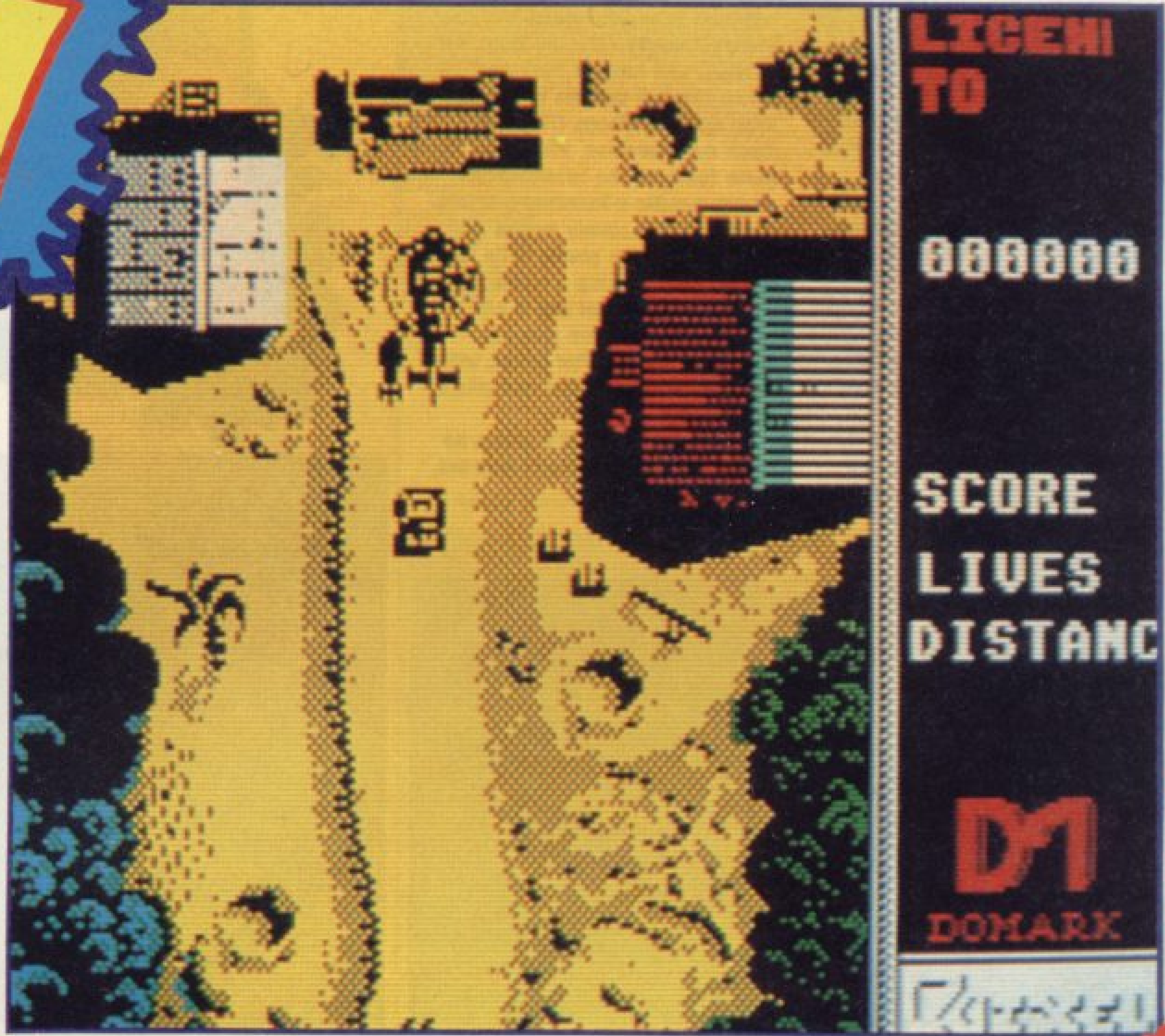


ZYBOTS

Zybots. The sort of name to strike terror into your heart. The sort of name to make the bravest man blanch. The sort of name no-one can spell.

Still and all, it was a rather good coin-op, and in the way of rather good coin-ops, someone's having a bash at converting it, and since it was an Atari coin-op the onus (good word that) has fallen on Tengen, Domark's new label. Their first effort was Vindicators, a not-bad-but-not-marvellous tank battley thing. Zybots is a quite different kettle of eels, featuring a split-screen maze thingy shown in 3-D. The plot's a bit like Humanoid – remember Humanoid? – in that it's mainly a matter of chasing robots around and zapping them before they zap you. Could be good.

Streetdate: July.
Price: £8.95



LICENCE TO KILL

I don't think Alistair McLean meant James Bond to be such a poof when he wrote the books (or was it Neville Shute?) but here we are with Timothy Dalton playing the neo-fascist imperialist sexist assassin in the fifty-fifth spy romp, Licence to Kill, **and good old Domark are doing the game, and quite right too.**

I think we can expect the usual selection of biffs, bangs, explosions, shooting and mayhem, rather than, say, a thoughtful strategy game involving an in-depth knowledge of higher mathematics and semantic skills. Certainly the screenshot look full of helicoptery fun, and who can say fairer than that?

Streetdate: June.
Price: £8.95

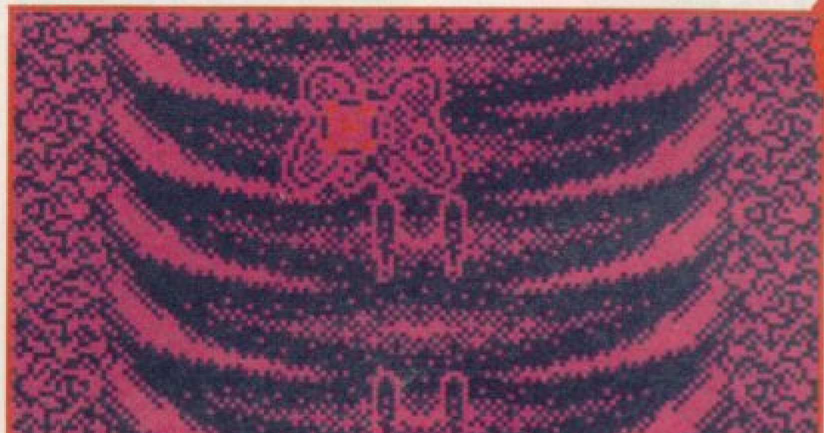
GEMINI WING



Last night I had this terrible dream. I was flying along happily in my cosmic space cruiser, and just as I was coming up to a lovely waterfall, this HUGE WALRUS jumped out, all teeth and bad breath, and started gnashing at me . . .

Too much Stilton for supper, you might think, but no! This is in fact the actual scenario of Gemini Wing, **a forthcoming biggie from Virginmastertronic-incoporatedPLC. Converted from the Tecmo coin-op, it's a one- or two-player vertical scroller with loads of levels, loads of aliens and loads of lovely weapons to collect. The coin-op's a bit aged but the Speccie version, produced by The Sales Curve, is looking good. And the walrus? He's one of the end-of-level guardians. Other baddies include savage butterflies and stingy scorpions. Sounds like my back garden.**

Streetdate: June.
Price: £8.95







ALTERED BEAST

It's big this one. There can't have been anybody who hasn't looked at the coin-op, seen the huge, well animated graphics and said, 'coo, that's nice!' Funnily enough, it doesn't look like it's going to be completely unconvertible. The lucky folks blessed with the job of converting it are those lovely Activision people, and judging from this screen shot, they aren't doing too bad a job of it.

The plot is simple. You are a dead Roman gladiator, who has been awoken from your grave by some deity or other to rescue his daughter from an enemy who bears an uncanny resemblance to Freddy Krueger. You run from left to right, and have to kick and punch through swarms of ghouls, head sucking gloops (!?!) and much more besides. Plus, the game features the revolutionary change-o-matic-o-transform-o-action -vision, which simply means that by collecting the power balls left behind after kicking a white wolf, you get a bit bigger and a bit harder. Collect three and you transform into another beast, with even better capabilities and who's even harder.

It sure looks like it's gonna be something special. One to look out for.

Streetdate: July.
Price: £9.95





SUPER-SCRAMBLER

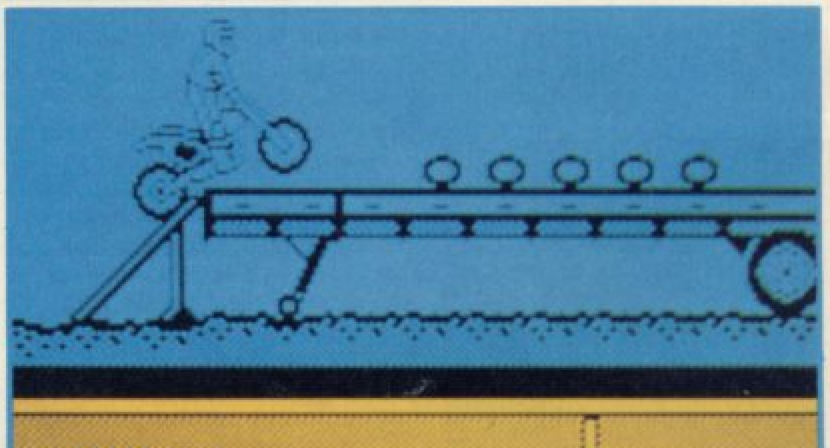
You loved Kikstart. You loathed Moto Cross Sim (well we did, anyway). But is there space in your life left for another motorcycling simulation?

Well there'd better be, otherwise you're going to have a big dent in your petrol tank when SuperScambler from Gremlin wedges its way in next month(ish).

With dual vertical and horizontal views of a scrambling course which appears to be littered with second-hand cars and kitchen applieances, this may be the challenge Kikstart devotees have been waiting for.

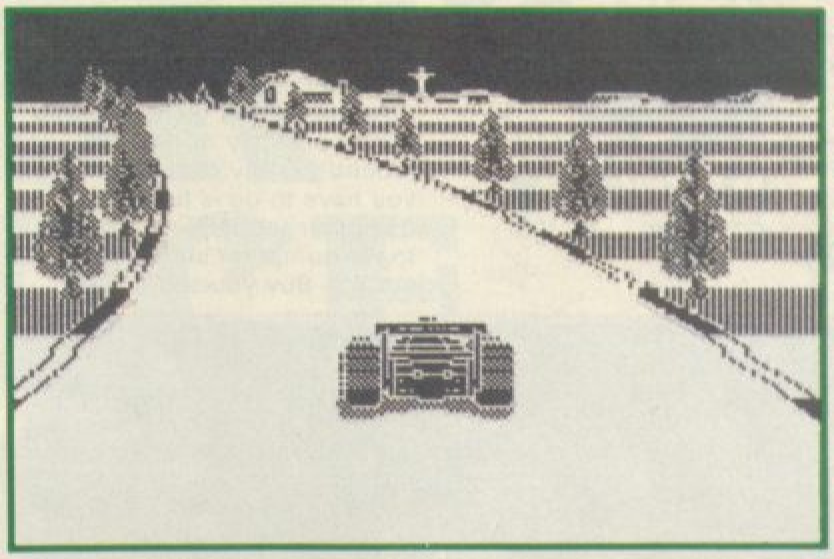
Streetdate: June.
Price: £7.95

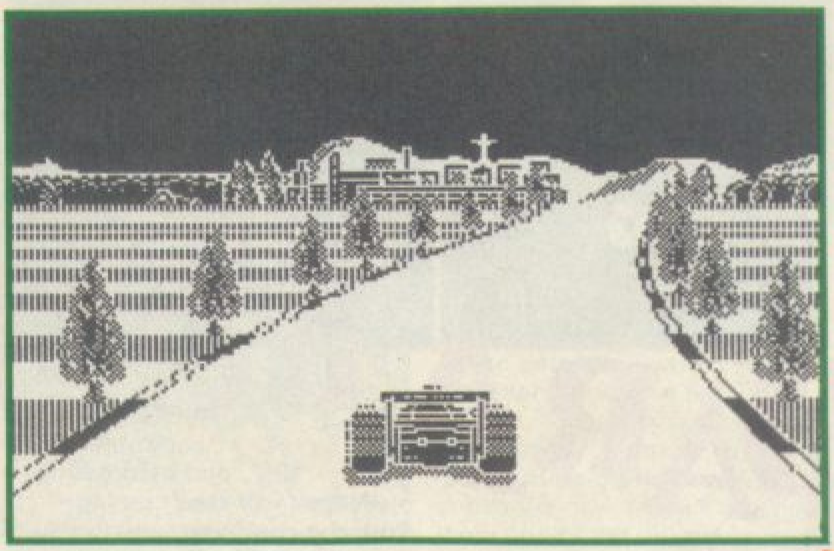






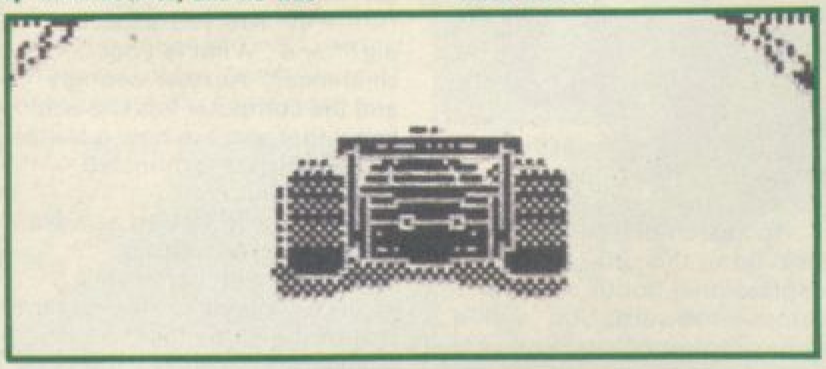






CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

Now we all know the anecdote about how the little Japanese chappie was on the Transatlantic phone link to the European coin-op manufacturer, and he was asked "What's this flippin' racing game called then?" and replied "Continental Circuits", and the silly Belgian or whatever at the other end thought he said "Circus", so it's a racing game and not a funny laughey clown simulation at all. All we know so far about the conversion is that it's looking a bit black-and-white – hopefully the programmers will put some colour in before letting the thing off the starting grid. And it's another Virginmastertronic-incorporatedPLC production!
Streetdate: June.
Price: £8.95.

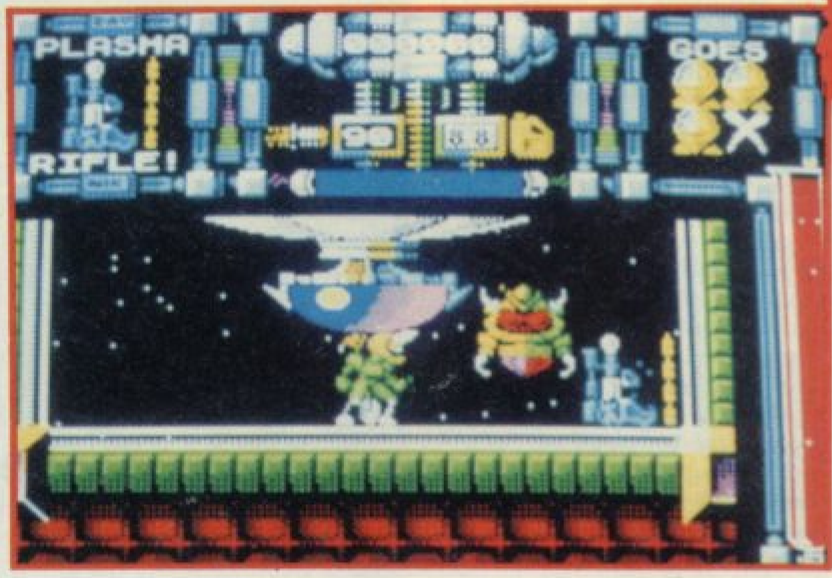


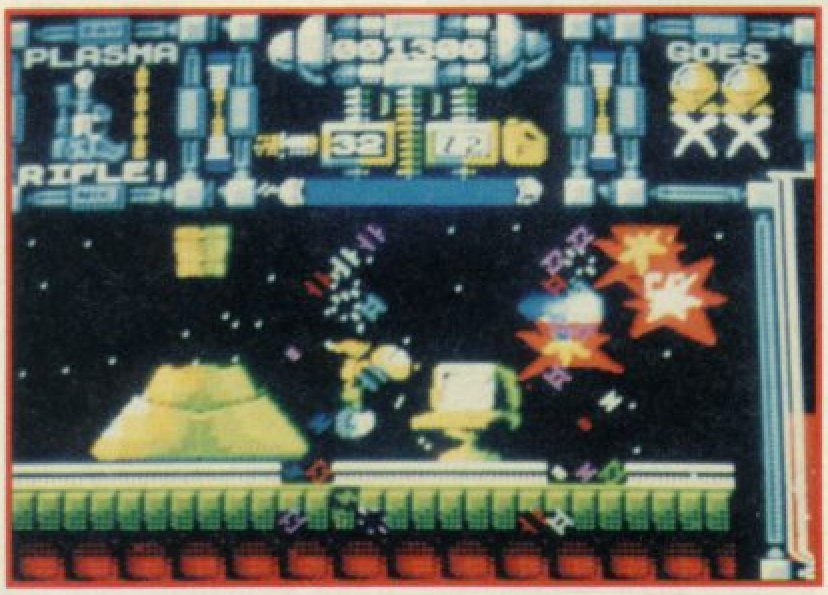
OH MY GOD IT'S INCREDIBLE!

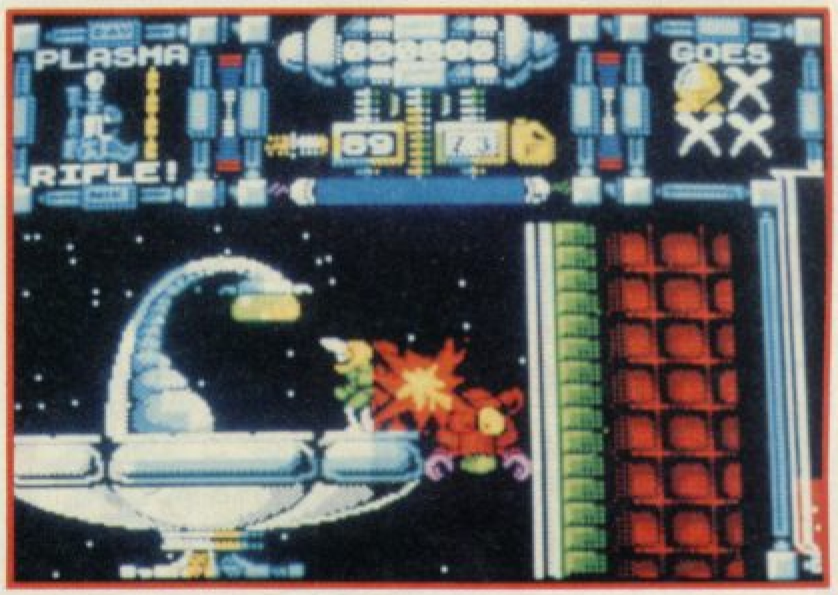


Yes, these are screenshots from the SPECTRUM VERSION of a game currently being worked on by those masterful programmers at Probe. Everything is so completely top secret that we can't even tell you what it's called, but that by next month it will have been signed to one of the major software companies and we'll have a storyline etc.

What we can tell you is that so far as we're concerned, ti looks as if it could turn out to be one of the finest graphics extravaganzas ever seen on the Spec.







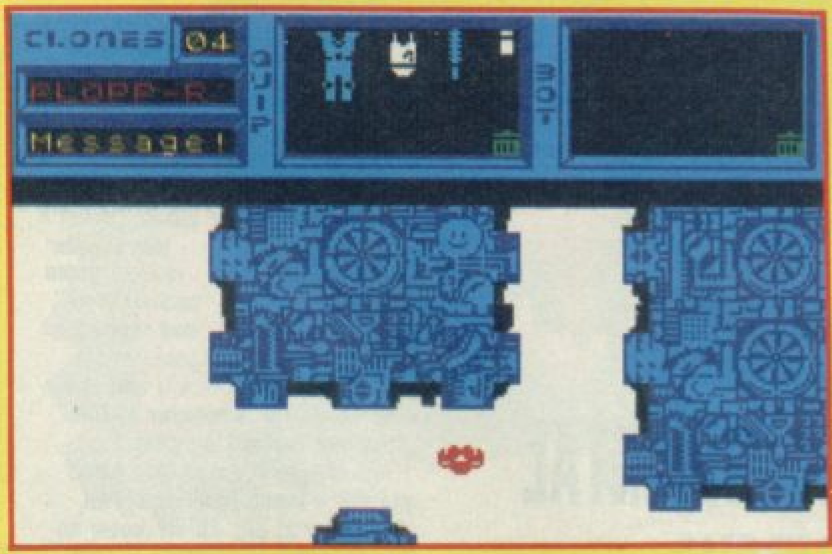
GAMES REVIEW!

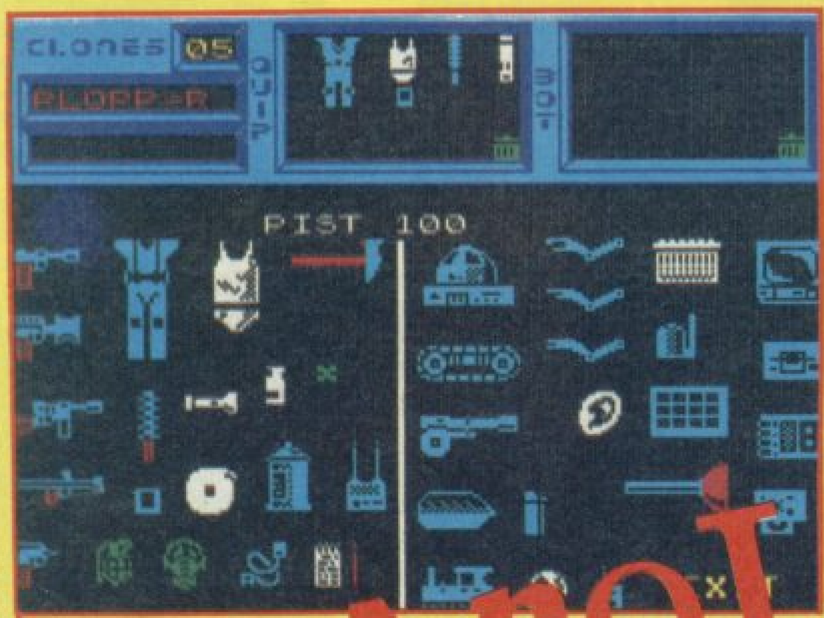
PARANOIA COMPLEX

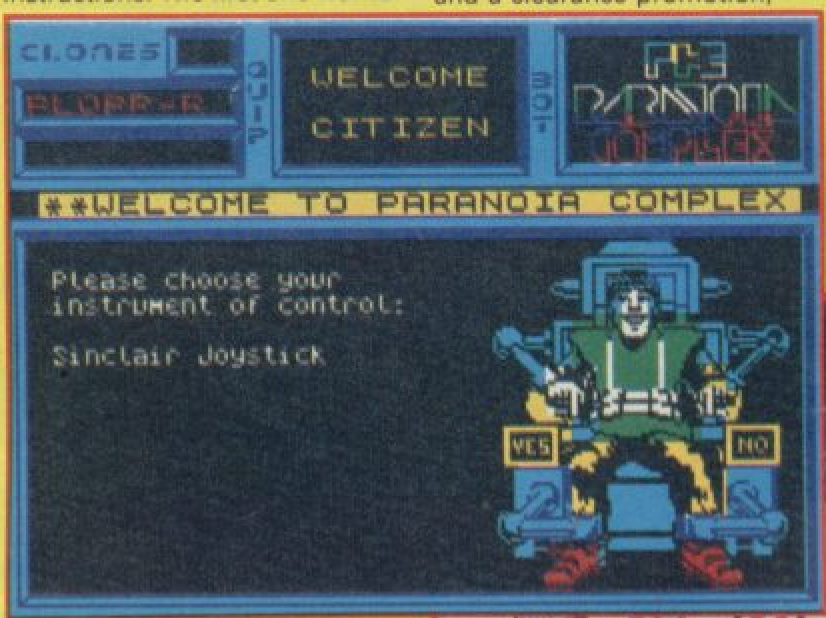
Why do I get the feeling that this game might of taken some inspiration from **1984**. The Paranoia Complex is a largish city set somewhere in the vicinity of Milton Keynes. The controlling force of the city is Friend Computer. He provides all the food, jobs, issues of SU and everything else needed to survive, and peace is controlled via a bunch of burly henchmen known to all as Police.

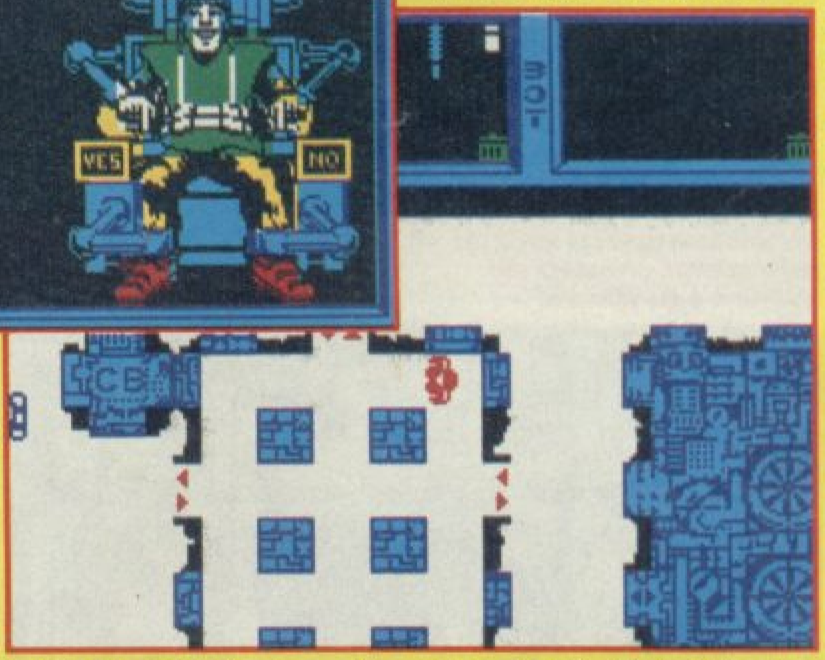
The city is at unrest. Lots of people are unhappy and are joining together to form resistance groups. You have been chosen by the computer to be an undercover agent. You must travel around the city keeping an eye on things and generally keeping within the law because, Friend of the computer or not, the guards will still shoot you on sight upon word of command from ol' FC.

At the start of the game, you are an ordinary minion moving around the city. The first thinig you have to do is find a computer terminal and log on to the computer shopping system. Buy yourself a communicator and before long, messages will start coming from the computer, giving you instructions. The first one warns you of a traitor who is running around the city killing people. This means that if you get in his way, he'll kill you. The trick is to stand on a corner and jump him as he walks past. Once he's down, you have to search his pockets for a disk. Bring this disk to a confessional booth, and the computer rewards you with a large amount of money and a clearance promotion, which allows you to reach other levels of the city.









Just to make sure you are mentally sound, you are stopped by the guards and at computer checkpoints, where you are asked psychoanalytical questions, all of which are answered by a simple yes or no. Questions such as "Are you happy?", "Are you a fascist pig?" and "What is your clearance?" Answer wrongly and the computer lets the world know that you are now a traitor and should be terminated immediately.

The game is viewed as a plan view flip screen arcade adventure with some very nicely animated sprites, but the rest of the game looks a bit sparse. All the sprites are the same, just different colours representing different ranks. The backdrops are bland and very samey all the way through. I must say, I get bored very quickly looking at this game.

A game with as much content and promise as this should be (a) deep, (b) involved and (c) fun. In reality **The Paranoia Complex** is (a) dull, (b) boring and (c) tedious. I just didn't enjoy playing it at all. At first I thought it was because there was some gameplay element I was missing out on, but as I played through I realised this wasn't the case.■

ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

THE PARANOIA COMPLEX *Label:* **Gremlin** *Author:* **Magic Bytes** *Price:* **£9.95** *Memory:* **48K/128K** *Joystick:* **Various**

Failed attempt to recreate a dark, moody atmosphere and a paranoia inducing situation.

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

GRAPHICS	SOUND
58	61
68	60
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

OVERALL 62

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

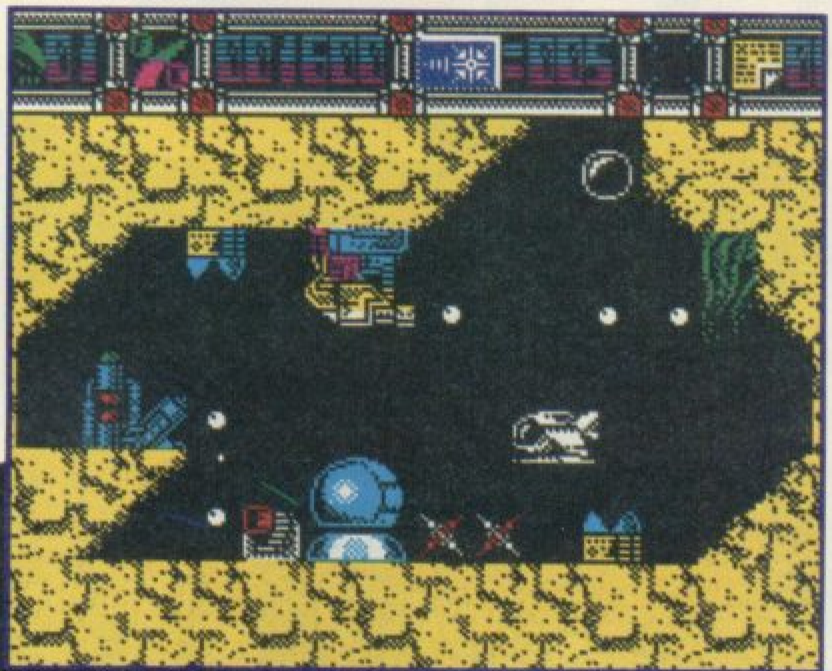
TASK FORCE

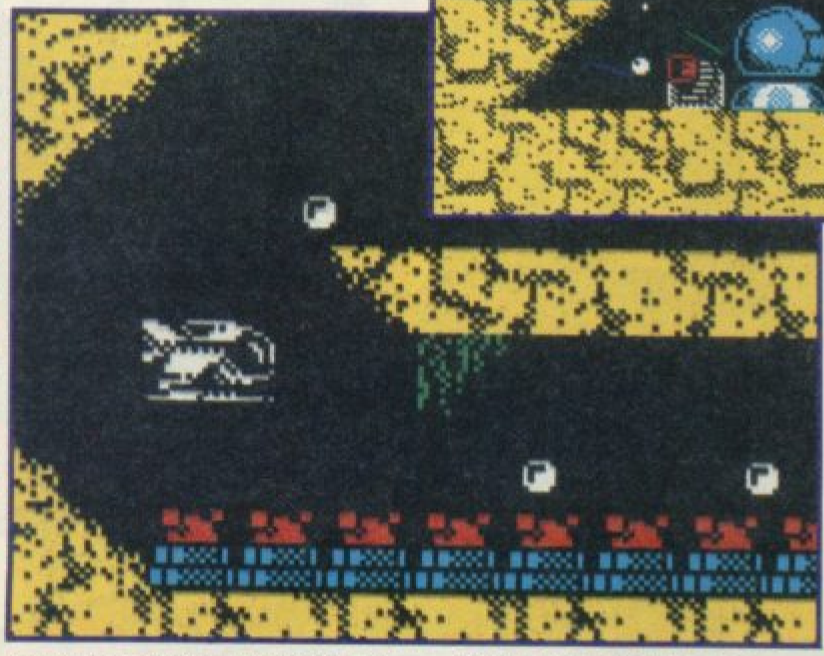
GAMES REVIEW!

The Taskforce is in fact "a state of the art jet fighter bristling with destructive firepower missiles, heat seekers, mines, orbitals and bouncing bombs", or so the blurb says. All I can say to add to that is it must be one hell of a jet plane..

It can fly in eight directions, hover and saying that it's a low level attack craft is like saying that the channel tunnel is going to be a bit damp on the outside. **Taksforce,** which let's face it is a pretty bad name for an aircraft, flies through caverns and down deep within the bowels of the planet, seeking out . . . the dreaded Snide Gartree!

Dan dan daaa! (Woman's voice) No, not the Snide Gantree. (Butch male voice) Yes, the Snide Gantree. That dastardly bunch of mercenaries led by none other than Graham Taylor. Shortly after losing his job on SU and moving off to become Editor of C+GT, he lost his mind under the pressure of working on the same floor as





Ad Manager Garry Williams. His will snapped, and he now threatens to take over the world. He doesn't quite know how yet, but he says where there's a will, there's a way. (This is all lies, what's going on? – Alison.)

After a build up like that, naturally you'd expect a brilliant game to follow. Yet again, the Spectrum software industry lets you down. It's good, but it's far from brilliant. Viewed, and in fact played very similarly to **Cybernoid 2,** the screen flips in four directions, though unlike **Cybernoid,** the game is a maze, rather than a set pattern. That said, it's not a very difficult maze.

As in **Cybernoid,** you have a selection of weapons to choose from. These range from four way bouncing bombs, through delayed four-way bouncing bombs to shield, taking in a homing missile or two along the way.



Another thing the game has that isn't in **Cybernoid** is a sub-game. In **TF,** you have to find all the missile activate icons that when detonated, will blow up the island and take the Snide with it. You are presented with three pegs, one of which has a pile of three blocks. You have to move the pile, a block at a time onto one of the other two pegs. The only rule is you can't put a large peg onto a small peg and you have to take the top peg in any pile. Fun eh?

Taskforce is fun for a short while, but it isn't something I'd have to keep playing for hours before I could happily relinquish the joystick. It's good but no more■





ARCADE REVIEW

FAX BOX

TASKFORCE *Label:* ***Players Premier*** *Author:* ***Knight/Beston/Severn*** *Price:* ***£1.99*** *Memory:* ***48K/128K*** *Joystick:* ***Various***

GRAPHICS	SOUND
76	65
79	68
PLAYABILITY	LAST ABILITY

A fun shoot-'em-up, but surprisingly short on addictive qualities

Reviewer: Tony Dillon

OVERALL 74

Oi! BUY THIS!



No messin'. You young punks gotta be seen in this! The all-new 1989 SU T-Shirt is totally great and comes with the near legendary punk from the amazing Street Fighter **issue of SU. It does not only guarantee instant credibility on the street, it comes in a choice of two fabulous sizes; XXL for really big people and medium for normal type people. It's also pretty cheap for something that is so totally marvellous. So buy it OK?**

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Gremlin



Gary Lineker. The Man. The Legend. And now, the Spot on the Carpet in the SU office which will never be cleaned again. (What's so unusual about that? – AS). No. this spot is special. Because that's the spot where Gary (as we call him) stood to have his photo taken with lovely Jim and lovely Tim, who were both overcome with awe as you can see from this "snap".

Why was Gazza (as we call him) here? Why, the girlies on the staff want to know, didn't they have their pictures taken with him ('Cos they'd have got over-excited – JD). What team does Gazzoola (as we call him) play for again? The answers to these and eleven other questions won't be answered in next month's "Gremlin's Sports Stars Who Just Happened to be Passing and Needed the Lav Corner".

More Not Quite Rude Characters

Well you really are a smutty bunch of readers. We're still getting plenty of entries to the Smutty Name – Well Nearly Compo, and here are a few to keep you a-snikkering and chortling. Keep 'em coming.

Calvin Bucker (the 24-hour trucker)
Simon Trent (he's totally spent)
Douglas Hurd (with a face like a nerd)
William Batt (he's a complete sprat)
Cecilia Fritz (and her oversized bits)
Gordon O'Grit (he stinks of spit)
Anthea Stitch (and her humorous twitch)

A big thank you to Leigh Loveday for the above suggestions – ooh you are awful Leigh!

Caption Compo No 29



Well I really don't know what to say. May obviously wasn't a month for hilarious, rib splitting jokes was it. Frankly your attempts were pretty bloomin' weedy. We know you can do better than this, so you better buck your ideas up and be screamingly jolly for Compo No 30.

We've waded through all the crud and among the not so crap ones was the following from Victor Peixoto, "I told you we shouldn't have read Your Sinclair" which gave us a bit of a giggle. The winner though this month is Paul Tapner from Poole in Dorset with "Now that's what I call a heavy curry". Not bad Paul, £20 is on its way to you now.



Oh No Not Again!!!

You're really not gonna believe this readers. Remember last month we gave a ruddy long list of names for those of you who SU owes money to. You see we'd lost all the addresses and blow me down if it hasn't happened again. It's all Tony Dillon's fault (it isn't really but we've got to blame someone) so we've given him a good kicking and he's really sorry. So here goes with this month's mega list. We promise this will never happen again:

1 DAVID RUCK
2 OWEN SMITH-JAYNES
3 M CADIER
4 G NORRIS
5 RICHARD GREEN
6 A ROBERTS
7 JP DUNHAM
8 KEITH ELLIS
9 MARK FALCONER
10 DAMIAN HIGGINS
11 JONATHAN HINDS
12 PAUL JACKSON
13 DUNCAN SMITH
14 BEN SOUTHGATE
15 DOMINIC ALLOTT
16 NOEL BYRNE
17 DAVID LEIGH
18 CARL REDFERN
19 IAIN SISSON
20 DAVID RATCLIFF
21 IAN GORSKI
22 SJ LONGWORTH
23 MICHAEL MEEHAN
24 PAUL MOUNTNEY
25 CHRIS GOODCHILD
26 K STABLER
27 PAUL LEWIS

If your name has appeared in the list above them give me, Alison a ring at the SU office on 01-251 6222 (ext 2447) and claim your cash.



Caption Compo No 30

Right then, what's going on here? It's that chappie Sean Connery with his mate Christopher Lambert from that flick of quite a while ago, Highlander. As you can see they're deep in conversation. What do you think they're chatting about . . . the meaning of life, or maybe the price of Kellogs raisin splits? We think Sean is saying, "Oi saucy give us a song", then again we could be wrong. If you think you know what's occurring fill out the coupon below and whoosh it off to us at the following address: Sinclair User, 30-32 Priory Court, Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 5AU. Remember to mark your envelope Caption Compo No 30. Closing date 30 June 89.

Name ....

Address ....

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Caption..



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We're not talking any back-catalogue crap freebies here, though. **Forgotten Worlds** was reviewed last month and got a Classic. **Vigilante,** the other option is a smashing punch-'em-up.

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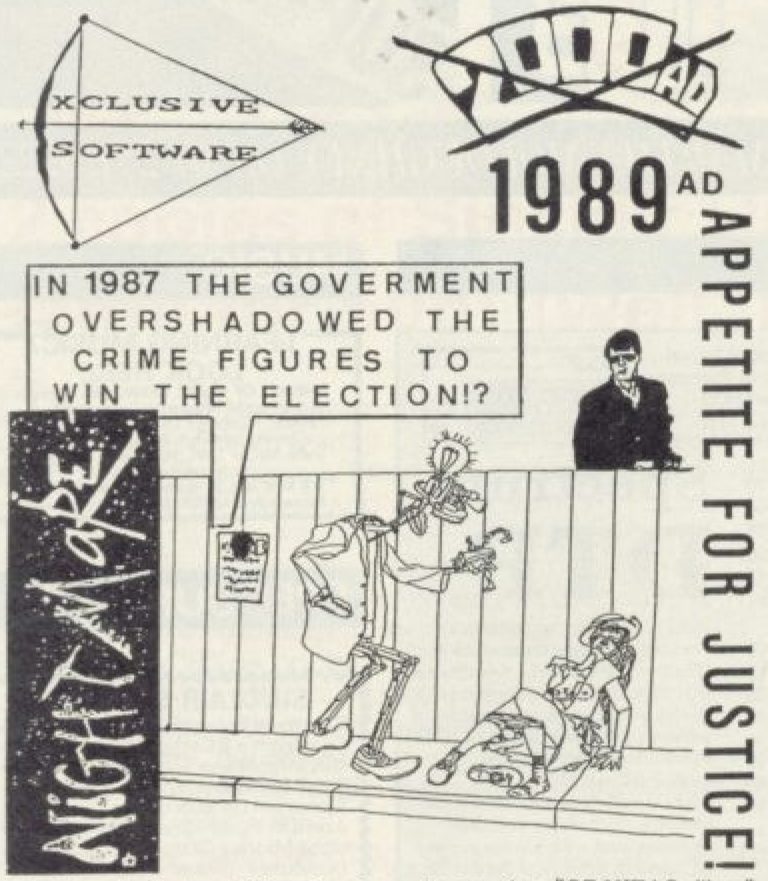
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NEXT MONTH

You may well be tempted to buy another Spectrum mag next month. They'll offer you some pretty okay software on their tape. But won't you feel just a little bit cheated? Shouldn't you get a decent sized mag as well as a good tape . . . ?

Megatape 17 will make you feel a lot better. We've got a SET OF GAMES to wipe the floor with ANYTHING that you've ever seen before. We've got demos of forthcoming stormers and there's the second Electrobingo; another chance to win prizes worth over £2,000.

But *we* haven't forgotten the issue itself. You'll be impressed. We've got the largest set of PLAYGUIDES and TIPS we've ever printed. There's an in-depth look at SECRET NEW GAMES the software barons were trying to keep under-wraps.

We're not giving any more away, but believe us – you haven't seen anything like it. Ever.

SU JULY – ESCAPES JUNE 18th

Great forces are at work

Hey Mr Newsagent!

I've just got through reading the Next Month page in Sinclair User, and I think I should warn you to order a whole load more copies than usual, 'cos they're doing something rather special for the July issue. Please reserve me a copy. I don't want to miss this one.

Name..

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